Annual Report
2009/10

30 Celebrating 30 Years of service to British Columbia
1979-2009

Ombudsperson

B.C.'s Independent Voice For Fairness

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Ombudsperson
B.C.'s Independent Voice For Fairness

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The Honourable Bill Barisoff
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament Buildings, Room 207
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Dear Mr. Speaker:

It is my pleasure to present the Office of the Ombudsperson's 2009/10 Annual Report to the Legislative Assembly.

This report covers the period April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 and has been prepared in accordance with section 31 (1) of the *Ombudsperson Act*.

Yours sincerely,

Kim S. Carter

Kim S. Carter
Ombudsperson
Province of British Columbia

October 2010

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From the Ombudsperson

30 Years of Service

In 2009 the Office of the Ombudsperson completed its 30th year of serving the people and the province of British Columbia. In October 2009 we celebrated British Columbia's first ever Fairness Week, which recognized the importance of fair, accountable and respectful government and the role of the Office of the Ombudsperson in supporting that goal. In addition to celebrating our history, we also made history by being the first provincial or territorial ombudsman office in Canada to officially enter the 21st century by changing our name to the Office of the Ombudsperson.

In looking back over the three decades we have been working to entrench good public administration in British Columbia, we had the opportunity to hear from those who had worked in our office and also those who had been helped by our office — individuals who had come to us with their concerns; public agencies that we had worked with to improve the fairness of their policies and processes; and members from all sides of the Legislative Assembly who value the non-partisan, apolitical work our office does and who recognize the assistance we provide to their constituents.

In our first decade of service, from 1979 to 1989, we saw an era of growth for the office. The *Ombudsman Act* (as it then was) was proclaimed on October 1, 1979. At that time British Columbia had a population of 2,691,121. The office had an original staff of 27 including the first ombudsman, Karl Friedmann, and two offices, one in Victoria and the other in Vancouver. While it had no computers or information technology staff, it did have several stenographer positions!

> *"After almost thirty years, it is possible to conclude that the B.C. Ombudsman has become firmly fixed in the province, has developed a high degree of public trust, has developed a good working relationship with public bureaucracies, and is largely perceived by politicians as vital to holding the executive to account."*
>
> *Patrick J. Smith, "Fairness Inc.: Administrative Justice in B.C. – The Ombudsman Office at Thirty," in Provincial and Territorial Ombudsman Offices in Canada, edited by Stewart Hyson, University of Toronto Press, December 2009*

In its first three months of operation it accepted a total of 580 complaints involving 43 public authorities, all of which were ministries or agencies of the provincial government. The greatest number of complaints involved the Workers' Compensation Board, followed by the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia; the Ministry of Human Resources; the Ministry of Transportation, Communications and Highways; and the Ministry of the Attorney General.

In its first decade, the office issued a variety of public reports on issues ranging from the operation of the workers' compensation system and the provincial government's lack of regulation of certain financial institutions to covert surveillance of pro-choice advocates on behalf of a law firm working for the attorney general. It dealt with complaints about lack of access to government held information and municipal police boards long before the establishment of the independent offices that now provide oversight in those areas.

From the Ombudsperson

In 1989, the office's tenth anniversary year, British Columbia had a population of 3,229,220. The office accepted 7,318 complaints involving 108 provincial ministries, boards and commissions. It had a staff of 39 including the third ombudsman, Stephen Owen, and two offices, one in Victoria and one in Vancouver.

During its second decade of service, the office's jurisdiction expanded significantly to include local governments, health authorities and hospitals, schools and school boards, colleges and universities and self-governing professions, giving it the widest jurisdiction of any provincial ombudsman office in Canada. Between 1989 and 1999 the office also had a significant focus on children and youth issues, with the then-ombudsman, Dulcie McCallum, appointing Brent Parfitt as deputy ombudsman for children and youth. The office produced a series of reports about the treatment of children and youth, including one on the abuse of deaf students at Jericho Hill School, as well as the *Fair Schools* report and *Getting There*, a follow-up on the provincial government's implementation of the Gove Inquiry into Child Protection.

> *"The ongoing institutional health of the B.C. OmbudsOffice is a tribute not only to the contributions of the early incumbents and their staffs, but also the later Ombudsmen who have had to trade some of that heritage to uphold the office under some duress."*
>
> *Patrick J. Smith, "Fairness Inc.: Administrative Justice in B.C. – The Ombudsman Office at Thirty," in Provincial and Territorial Ombudsman Offices in Canada, edited by Stewart Hyson, University of Toronto Press, December 2009*

By 1999 the office had become an integral part of good public governance in British Columbia. October 1 to 8, 1999, was declared Ombudsman Week in British Columbia and a joint Canada-US Ombudsman Association meeting was held in Victoria to celebrate. British Columbia had grown to a population of 4,021,600 and the Office of the Ombudsman had grown along with it. It had a staff of 50, an operating budget of $4,663,000 (1999 dollars), received 11,865 inquiries, requests for assistance and complaints, and had an office in Victoria and another in Vancouver. A new ombudsman, Howard Kushner, succeeded Dulcie McCallum that year.

The following decade proved a productive but challenging one for the office. While continuing to investigate and resolve individual complaints, as well as issue public reports on issues such as the application of the Forest Worker Transition Program and self-governance in the health professions, the office struggled to restructure and meet its statutory obligations after undergoing a 35 per cent budget cut that was implemented during the fiscal years 2001/02 to 2004/05. By 2004/05, the Vancouver office had closed, and the number of staff had been reduced to 30. In addition, the office was not investigating complaints about a significant number of authorities that fell within its jurisdiction, including local governments, health authorities and hospitals.

> *Just a short note of thanks for your efforts on my behalf with the Ministry of Health. People such as yourself are a blessing to people who don't know who to reach out to.*
>
> *From a thank-you letter sent to us in 2009/10*

In 2004, the office accepted the responsibility for providing administrative, financial, IT and corporate service support to other offices of the legislature.

This period of contraction continued until 2006 when the office again began to exercise jurisdiction over all the authorities within its mandate. A modest increase in resources between 2006 and 2008 allowed the establishment of a dedicated systemic investigation team that produced public reports on issues ranging

From the Ombudsperson

from the security of lottery prize payouts, to challenges to providing safe drinking water, and improvements to seniors' care. The increase also allowed for the establishment of a highly effective early resolution process that, in appropriate cases, can quickly resolve complaints, which assists both the individuals who come to us with complaints and concerns and the public authorities that they are complaining about. Between 2006 and 2009 there was also a 30 per cent increase in the number of complaints and requests for information or assistance our office received.

In 2009/10, British Columbia had a population of 4,479,934. The Office of the Ombudsperson received 8,344 complaints and requests for information or assistance, involving over 300 different provincial ministries, commissions, boards, local government authorities, health authorities, school boards, colleges and universities, professional associations and other authorities. Its operating budget was $4,773,000 (2009 dollars). The office had 32 staff devoted to ombudsperson core activities and provided support to four offices of the legislature with a shared services staff of 14.

Karl Friedmann, B.C.'s first ombudsman, with a copy of the Fairness Week proclamation.

In looking back over the past 30 years, British Columbians and all those who have worked in the Office of the Ombudsman can be satisfied that, as the 2009 Fairness Week proclamation declared, the office has "assisted hundreds of thousands of British Columbians to obtain fair treatment and hundreds of public authorities to improve the fairness of their administrative processes." In looking forward to our next decade of service, the Office of the Ombudsperson will continue its work to ensure that the right of British Columbians to fair and reasonable treatment by public authorities is respected. This promotes accountable government and confidence in the democratic process.

Our Role

The Office of the Ombudsperson has a unique role. It exists to ensure that all people in British Columbia are treated fairly and reasonably by public authorities. It is also responsible for general oversight of the administrative actions of government authorities and for strengthening the democratic principles of openness, transparency and accountability in government administration.[1] Our office is independent of government and conducts impartial, confidential investigations, consults to seek fair resolutions, makes findings and recommendations, and issues reports. We respond to individual complaints of administrative

[1] *Report of the Special Committee to Appoint an Ombudsman*, Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, second session, 38th Parliament, April 26, 2006, page 1.

unfairness and also initiate systemic investigations. The ombudsperson is responsible to the Legislative Assembly and may comment publicly on matters relating to the ombudsperson's role or on particular cases investigated by the ombudsperson's office.

Our Mandate

> *Thank you for your ability to affirm and help a person make sense of a situation!*
>
> *From a thank-you message sent to us in 2009/10*

Under the authority of the *Ombudsperson Act*, the ombudsperson's office can investigate complaints of unfair treatment involving any of the more than 2,800 public agencies in the Province of British Columbia that fall within its jurisdiction. The office has the authority to investigate any matter of administration involving a public authority within its jurisdiction. A matter of administration includes everything done by a public authority in the implementation of government policies. It does not, however, include activities of the Legislative Assembly or the courts.[2]

When our office identifies unfair treatment, we work in a consultative manner to seek a fair resolution. In addition to resolving individual problems when possible, we are always looking to remedy any underlying deficiencies in administrative processes, so that the same problems do not recur.

The persuasive power of the ombudsperson's office comes from its careful and impartial investigations, which, if a fair resolution cannot be obtained, lead to well-grounded findings and thoughtful, useful recommendations. Especially for those who lack the resources to challenge the fairness of the government's administrative decisions in court, our office provides an important recourse and potential avenue for obtaining justice.

We were very proud when our employee Teri Burley (centre) was named the 2009 champion of the Capital Region's Provincial Employees Community Services (PECSF) fundraising drive. The mission of PECSF is to support local charitable organizations through workplace fundraising. Also pictured are Lorne Brownsey, deputy minister for the Intergovernmental Relations Secretariat, and PECSF's honorary chair for 2009 (left) and Ombudsperson Kim Carter (right).

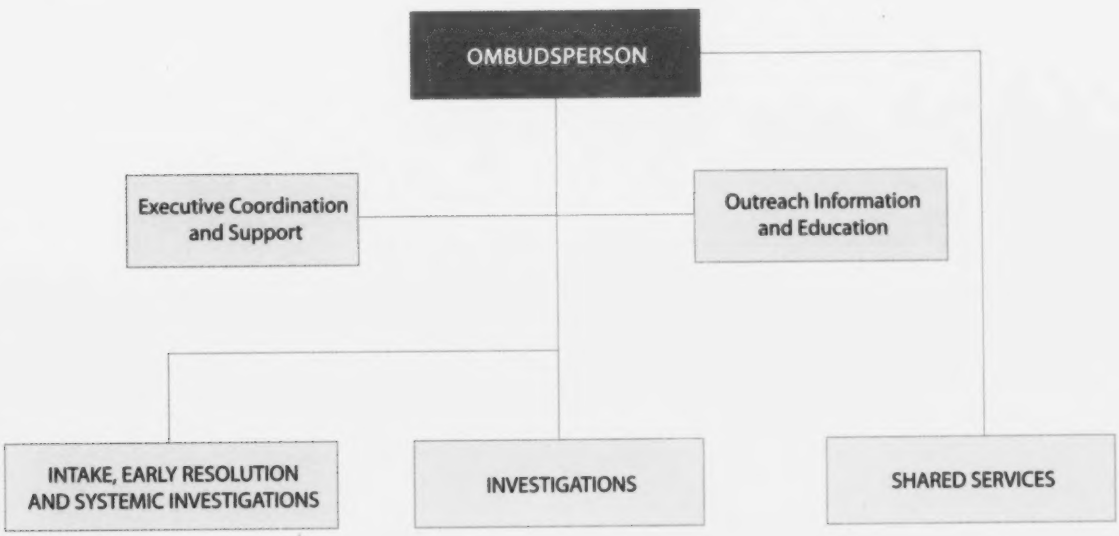
[2] *British Columbia Development Corporation v. British Columbia (Ombudsman)* [1984] 2 S.C.R. 447 at 463.

From the Ombudsperson

Our Organization

We are a small, lean and nimble organization with three interconnected "lines of business": intake and early resolution, investigations, and systemic investigations. Another vitally important component of our organization is shared services. Shared services provides business planning, financial services, facilities management, human resources and IT support to four independent offices of the legislature: the Office of the Ombudsperson, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner and the Office of the Merit Commissioner.

Organization Chart, 2009/10



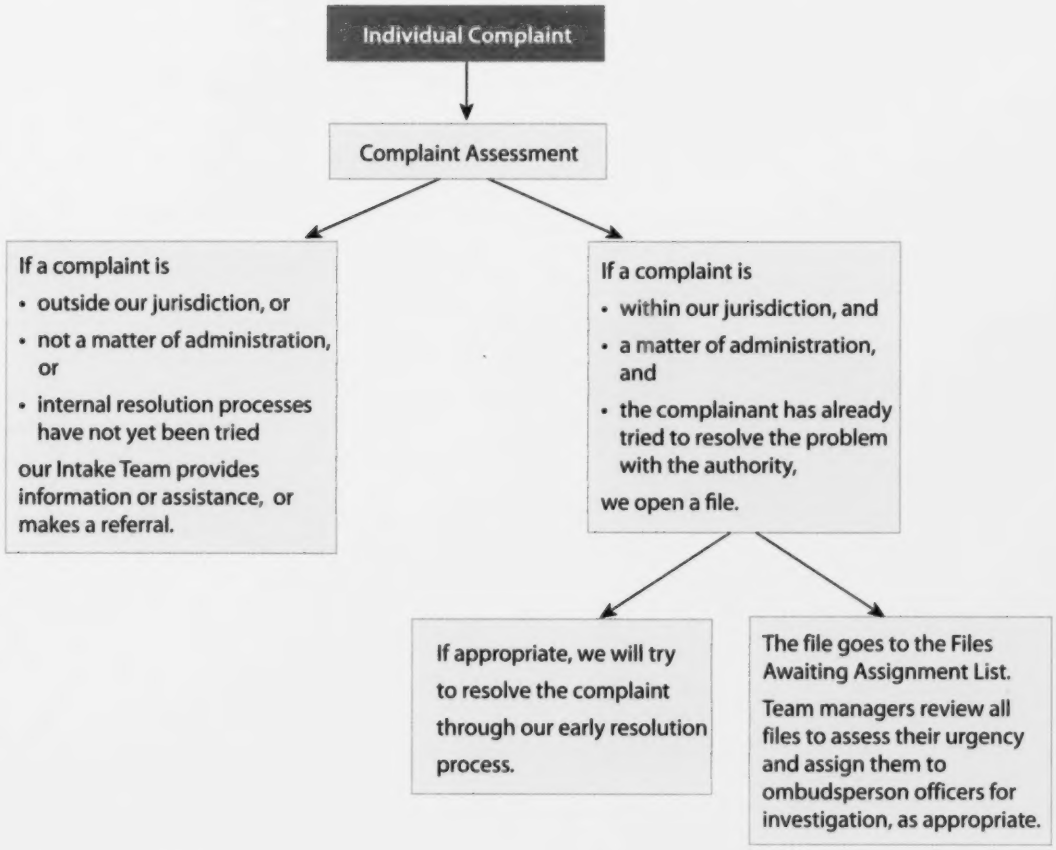
Our Process

Normally people who come to the ombudsperson's office with a complaint have already tried to resolve their problem with the public agency they are complaining about. If they are not aware of, or have not used, that agency's own dispute resolution processes, our staff will usually refer them to those processes. Once our office is engaged, we open a file. If it appears the nature of the complaint (for example, unreasonable delay or inadequate reasons for a decision) is suitable for our early resolution process, we will offer the person that option.

If the complaint seems unsuitable for our early resolution process, or if that process is not successful, then the complaint goes on the Files Awaiting Assignment List. From there, a team manager will either assign it to an ombudsperson officer for investigation or deal with it themselves.

From the

What Happens When Someone Contacts Our Office


Individual Complaint
Complaint Assessment
If a complaint is
• outside our jurisdiction, or
• not a matter of administration, or
• internal resolution processes have not yet been tried
our Intake Team provides information or assistance, or makes a referral.
If a complaint is
• within our jurisdiction, and
• a matter of administration, and
• the complainant has already tried to resolve the problem with the authority,
we open a file.
If appropriate, we will try to resolve the complaint through our early resolution process.
The file goes to the Files Awaiting Assignment List.
Team managers review all files to assess their urgency and assign them to ombudsperson officers for investigation, as appropriate.

Assessing our Performance

2009/10 was a challenging year for our office. In the previous year the number of enquiries, requests for assistance and complaints we received had increased by 19 per cent over the year before. In 2009/10 it went up another five per cent. While all of us worked hard to address the ongoing increase, in the absence of any increase in staffing, the situation called for a careful evaluation of how we could best manage this increasing demand and deliver the best possible service.

Our early resolution process, which we initiated in 2008, continued to be successful, quickly resolving 310 complaints, but this was not sufficient to address the effect of the number of files continuing on to investigation. In 2009/10 this was a total of 2,226 files.

On behalf of you, your team and the administration of the BC Ombudsperson office, I want to thank you for helping me win my case ... Bravo! Justice! Thank you so much.

From a thank-you message sent to us in 2009/10

From the Ombudsperson

As a consequence of the increasing intake, in September 2009 we initiated a significant reorganization of the process for assigning files and created a Files Awaiting Assignment List. All files that were assigned to investigators after that date first went through the process for files awaiting assignment. This meant each file was evaluated by a manager who could: assign it directly to an investigator if the situation was assessed as urgent; maintain the file on the list while regularly reviewing it and assigning it as soon as an ombudsperson officer was able to actively investigate the matter; or, working with a part-time assistant, resolve certain issues themselves.

While delaying the commencement of investigations was done only after significant consideration, regretfully and with an understanding that there was a risk that this would be seen as incompatible with the principles of administrative fairness, it was absolutely necessary. The process was designed to ensure all complainants were dealt with equitably and fairly in the circumstances and that they had ongoing access to our office to address any changes in their circumstances that might affect the status of their complaint.

This initiative allowed ombudsperson officers the chance to spend more time investigating and resolving issues and less time managing their caseloads. As a result of this initiative, as well as the focus and dedication of our investigative team members, the number of files closed in 2009/10 went up to 2,336, more than 25 per cent higher than the year before and the highest number closed since 2002. A representative sample of the types of cases we dealt with and the resolutions achieved is found in the section of this report devoted to case summaries.

We strive to contribute to the wider ombudsman community. Two of our staff — Shera Skinner and Carly Hyman — helped us do that this year by publishing their article, "The Ombudsman Office in Denmark and British Columbia, Canada: A Comparative Study" in the prestigious professional journal, the International Ombudsman Institute Yearbook.

Hard work and innovation, however, still have limits. Despite both, the overall length of time to close investigative files continued to climb. While the early resolution process and the work of managers and their assistants has resulted in a slight improvement in the percentage of files closed within 30 days in 2009/10, the length of time taken to close other files has increased and remains significantly below our performance objectives.

As with previous years, the largest number of files opened in 2009/10 involved provincial ministries, followed by provincial commissions and boards, and Crown corporations. More details can be found in the section of this report devoted to statistics.

Authority	Files Opened, 2009/10 (2008/09)	Files Closed, 2009/10 (2008/09)
Ministries	53% (52%)	53% (55%)
Commissions and Boards	17% (14%)	17% (15%)
Crown Corporations	10% (9%)	10% (9%)
Local Government	8% (9%)	8% (9%)
Health Authorities	7% (12%)	7% (8%)
Professional Associations	2% (2%)	3% (2%)
Schools and Boards of Education	1% (1%)	1% (1%)

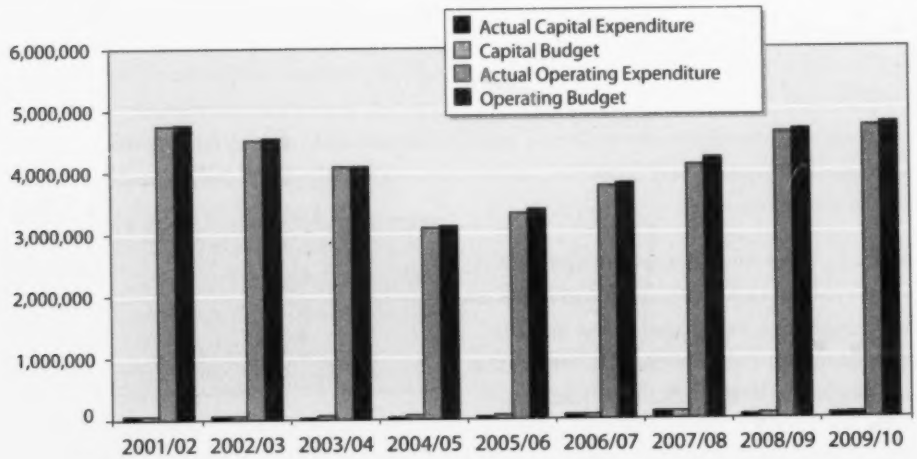
From the Ombudsperson

In addition to dealing with individual complaints our small systemic investigation team, assisted by a series of co-op law students, worked on the largest systemic investigation our office has ever done, on seniors' care in British Columbia.

In the course of the investigation, visits were made to more than 50 facilities providing seniors' care across the province. In addition, more than 600 input forms were received from seniors and other members of the public providing information on their experiences and concerns, and the systemic investigation team had to deal with more than 200 individual complaints involving seniors' care.

While these individual cases would normally have been assigned to one of the investigative teams, their increased caseloads and our office's resource limitations precluded this. Unfortunately having to deal with these cases, combined with an inability to reassign resources to augment the systemic investigation team, has delayed completion and release of this report, which is now targeted for 2011.

Our Budget



	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Actual Capital Expenditure	59,000	58,000	27,000	30,500	35,800	63,000	108,000	53,124	67,117
Capital Budget	59,000	59,000	62,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	110,000	75,000	75,000
Actual Operating Expenditure	4,750,600	4,516,000	4,086,000	3,093,000	3,326,000	3,761,000	4,100,000	4,624,535	4,721,577
Operating Budget	4,765,000	4,548,000	4,086,000	3,118,000	3,388,000	3,805,000	4,214,000	4,671,000	4,773,000
FTEs	**50**	**50**	**38**	**30**	**34**	**37**	**40**	**45 (32+13)**	**46 (32+14)**

Notes: The operating budget for 2003/04 includes $36,000 accessed from contingencies to assist with adjustments to leave liability.

The operating budget for 2004/05 includes $20,000 provided in supplementary estimates

The operating budget for 2006/07 includes $69,000 provided subsequent to the initial estimates in relation to the general public service salary adjustments.

For 2008/09 and 2009/10, we have provided the breakdown of the staff devoted exclusively to ombudsperson activities and those whose services are shared.

From the Ombudsperson

Jurisdiction

Our jurisdiction remained the same during this reporting period. The range of public authorities within our jurisdiction continues to be one of the widest of any provincial ombudsman office in Canada. The *Ombudsperson Act* allows us to investigate complaints about provincial ministries, commissions, boards and corporations, health authorities and hospitals, schools and school districts, colleges and universities, regional and municipal governments, public libraries, and self-regulating professional bodies such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons. In total, approximately 2,800 public authorities fall within the jurisdiction of our office.

First of all, thank you for the miraculous surprise… My wife phoned me this morning that unexpected funds were received from BC Housing.

From a thank-you letter sent to us in 2009/10

People also contact us about various authorities over which we have no jurisdiction, such as banks (which are within federal jurisdiction), municipal police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (which fall within the jurisdiction of the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner or the RCMP Public Complaints Commissioner), the BC Ferry Corporation, and home and property insurance (a private matter that does not involve a public authority). When people contact us about any of these non-jurisdictional organizations, whenever possible we refer them to other sources of assistance.

Outreach

Below is a representative list of the outreach activities our office undertook in 2009/10. It does not include meetings and consultations held as part of our systemic investigations into seniors' care.

Outreach Tours 2009/10

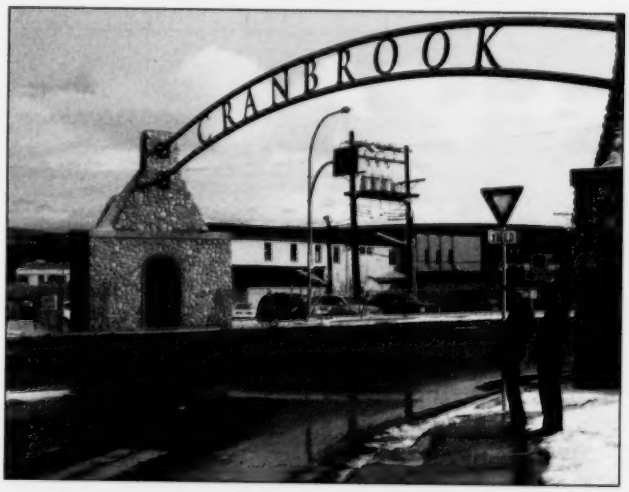
Northeast BC
Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Mackenzie

South Okanagan
Kelowna, Osoyoos, Penticton, Princeton

Southeast Kootenays
Cranbrook, Fernie, Kimberley

Would you like someone from the Ombudsperson's office to speak to your organization?

E-mail the details of your request to presentations@bcombudsperson.ca, or call 250-387-5855.



Cranbrook was one of the many communities our staff visited this year as part of our outreach efforts.

Outreach to Authorities

Ministries

Ministry of Community and Rural Development

Residential Tenancy Branch, Ministry of Housing and Social Development

Ministry of Housing and Social Development, regional offices, Mackenzie and Princeton

Investigations and Standards Office, Ministry of Attorney General and Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Local governments

City of Cranbrook
City of Dawson Creek
City of Fernie
City of Fort St. John
City of Kelowna
City of Kimberley
City of Penticton
District of Chetwynd
District of Mackenzie
Regional District of Central Okanagan
Northern Rockies Regional Municipality
Town of Osoyoos
Town of Princeton
Local Government Management Association
Union of BC Municipalities

School Districts, Universities and Colleges

College of New Caledonia
Prince Rupert Secondary School
School District 5 (Southeast Kootenay)
School District 52 (Prince Rupert)
School District 59 (Peace River South)
School District 60 (Peace River North)
School District 63 (Saanich)
School District 67 (Okanagan-Skaha)
School District 81 (Fort Nelson)
University of Victoria

Others

Burnaby Youth Custody Services Centre
Community Living BC
Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee
Prince George Youth Custody Services Centre
Interior Health Authority

Outreach to Non-profit Groups and Other Organizations

Auditor General of British Columbia

Autumn Lodge Society, Mackenzie

BC Civil Liberties Association — Freedom in Action Forum

BC Crime Prevention Association

BC Financial Healthcare Professionals Society Conference

BC Home and Community Care Conference

BC Legislative Interns

BC Psychogeriatric Association Conference

Boys and Girls Club, Osoyoos, Oliver

Canadian Bar Association

Capital Families Association

Centre on Aging, University of Victoria

Chetwynd Women's Resource Society

Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy

Cranbrook Society for Community Living

Constituency Assistants Conference, BC NDP Caucus

Denominational Health Association

Fernie Senior Citizens Drop-in Centre

Fernie Women's Resource Centre

Fort Nelson Family Development Society

Frontline Advocacy Workers Group, Vancouver

International Ombudsman Forum

Kimberley Society for Community Living

Lee Haskell Youth Centre, Kimberley

North Peace Community Services Society

Northwest Ombudsman Group

Osoyoos Seniors Centre Association

Penticton Seniors Drop-in Centre Society

Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 56, Princeton

South Okanagan Seniors Wellness Society

South Peace Community Resources Society, Dawson Creek

Summit Community Services Society, Cranbrook

The Law Centre, Victoria

The Law Foundation – Provincial Training Conference

The Law Society of British Columbia

United States Ombudsman Association

Water Street Seniors' Centre Society, Kelowna

Systemic Investigations and Reports

Public Report No. 46 — The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia (Part 1)

We released *The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in British Columbia (Part 1)* on December 17, 2009. It contains 10 recommendations that focus exclusively on issues affecting seniors in residential care.

> *We applaud the Ombudsperson in initiating this important investigation and very much appreciate the work, time and effort of the systemic investigation team in taking on such a multifaceted, complex, onerous and important investigation.*
>
> *Association of Advocates for Care Reform (ACR)*

Some of the key recommendations were

- creating a bill of rights for seniors in residential care and posting this document in a prominent location in every facility
- creating a single provincial website containing comprehensive, comparable information on residential care
- entrenching an expanded role for resident and family councils in legislation and supporting the development of regional family councils.

The residents' bill of rights became law in December 2009, as part of the *Health Statutes Amendment Act, 2009.*

Part 2 of the report is still in progress and is much broader in scope. It deals with general home and community care issues, as well as home support, assisted living and additional aspects of residential care. The authorities involved with the investigation are the Ministry of Health Services, the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, the Ministry of Housing and Social Development, the Fraser Health Authority, the Interior Health Authority, the Northern Health Authority, the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

The investigation process has included the analysis of a large volume of documents obtained from the authorities, as well as meetings and consultations with the health ministries and health authorities, individual seniors and their families, advocacy groups, academics, service providers, facility operators, unions and professional associations. The public input received through the questionnaire that was posted on the ombudsperson's website has been an invaluable aid to the investigation. The systemic team also visited 50 individual residential care and assisted living facilities.

We expect to publicly release the final report in 2011, after the affected authorities have had the opportunity to review and respond to its contents, as required by the *Ombudsperson Act.*

Hearing the Voices of Children and Youth: A Child-Centered Approach to Complaint Resolution — A Joint Special Report with Office of the Representative for Children and Youth

Our office worked with the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth to produce a joint report called *Hearing the Voices of Children and Youth: A Child-Centred Approach to Complaints Resolution*, which we released in January 2010.

This report identified several opportunities for the Ministry of Children and Family Development to improve its complaints processes so that they are more responsive and accessible to the vulnerable young people it serves. Our offices also worked together to produce a video about the report, targeted to youth. The report and the video can be viewed at www.bcombudsperson.ca and www.rcybc.ca.

Implementation of Recommendations in Special Report No. 32 — Fit to Drink: Challenges in Providing Safe Drinking Water in British Columbia

In June 2008, we issued *Fit to Drink: Challenges in Providing Safe Drinking Water in British Columbia.* This systemic report contained 39 recommendations made to the five regional health authorities, the Ministry of Environment, the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, and the then-Ministry of Health. The authorities agreed to implement all 39 of our recommendations. At the time that this annual report was published, all but Recommendation 5 was either in the process of being implemented or completed.

Our recommendations addressed the following areas: dealing with questions concerns and complaints, public advisories and notices, monitoring and enforcement, issues affecting small systems and drinking water management initiatives. Some of the steps public authorities have taken to implement our recommendations are as follows:

- Each of the regional health authorities and the provincial health officer has developed a clear policy on drinking water complaints and made these available on their websites. We were pleased to see each of the authorities explain its role, and the types of complaints and concerns it can deal with (Recommendation 1.1).
- All the health authorities are now making up-to-date boil water advisories available on their websites (Recommendations 8 and 9).
- The Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport has updated the BC NurseLine and the HealthLinkBC website with information about the general advisory on drinking water safety for those with compromised or weakened immune systems. It has also communicated this warning to health authorities, drinking water officers, environmental health officers, licensing officers, medical health officers and other groups, and has created an addendum to the *Drinking Water Officers' Guide* (Recommendation 13.1).
- Four of the five regional health authorities have provided us with positive, concrete results on their efforts to reduce the number of systems on boil water advisories by 10 per cent per year, by the end of 2011/12 (Recommendation 16).

  - The Fraser Health Authority reduced the number of systems on advisory by 25 per cent in 2008/09.
  - In 2008/09, the Northern Health Authority lifted 13 of the 49 boil water advisories that had been in effect for more than 18 months.
  - The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority reduced the number of systems on advisory by more than 10 per cent in both 2007/08 and 2008/09.
  - The Vancouver Island Health Authority reduced the number of advisories by 34 per cent in 2007/08 and by 13 per cent in 2008/09.
  - The Interior Health Authority has made no explicit commitment to reducing the number of systems on advisory, but has created a boil water notice remediation working group and has shifted resources to prioritize inspection of systems under advisory.
- The Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport has approved two new laboratories to provide water testing in remote areas (Recommendation 17).
- All the regional health authorities are now making their sampling data and inspection results publicly available (Recommendations 22 and 24).
- The Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport has begun to develop a small water systems strategy with the Sustainable Infrastructure Society and other stakeholders, and has taken steps to enable regional health authorities to identify all the small systems in their regions (Recommendations 29.1 and 31).
- The Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport has worked with the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to ensure that health authorities are notified when small water systems are created or licensed, and has created an addendum to the *Drinking Water Officers' Guide* to facilitate the identification of small systems (Recommendations 29.1 and 31).

Regular progress updates, as well as our entire report, can be found on our website.

Implementation of Recommendations in Public Report No. 45 — Last Resort: Improving Fairness and Accountability in British Columbia's Income Assistance Program

In March 2009, we released *Last Resort: Improving Fairness and Accountability in British Columbia's Income Assistance Program*. This systemic report contained 28 recommendations to the Ministry of Housing and Social Development, with various timelines for implementation. The recommendations addressed four areas: applying for income assistance, persons with persistent multiple barriers to employment (PPMB), medical and other documentation requirements, and implementation of previous commitments.

The ministry accepted and agreed to implement all our recommendations, with the exception of Recommendation 23, which dealt with compensation for people adversely affected by the ministry's delay in initiating a regulatory amendment.

Some of the steps the provincial government has taken to implement our recommendations so far are as follows:

- Three regulatory amendments have been made. As a result
    - people who have been actively looking for work for at least three weeks directly prior to applying for income assistance no longer have to conduct a further three-week work search before the ministry will assess their eligibility for income assistance (Recommendation 4).
    - sole applicants who have a child under the age of three are now exempt from the three-week work search requirement (Recommendation 5).
    - ministry staff now have the legal authority to waive the two-year independence requirement when applicants are not able to meet it due to circumstances beyond their control, as long as undue hardship would result from denying them assistance (Recommendation 9).
- In January 2010, the ministry posted a report called *Explaining the Decline in the Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers Caseload* on its website (Recommendation 17). It can be found at http://www.hsd.gov.bc.ca/publicat/pdf/ppmb_decline_2010.pdf
- In September 2009, the ministry sent a directive that requires its staff to review the documents already on file before asking clients to submit new documents (Recommendation 19).
- In September 2009, the ministry developed a new policy that outlines how it expects its staff to assist people to obtain documents (Recommendation 20A).
- The ministry entered a new agreement with Service BC in order to provide better service to communities without a ministry office. This agreement affects people in the communities of Kitimat, Fort Nelson and Nakusp (Recommendation 22).
- As of September 2009, the ministry had developed new policy and procedures to address the issue of providing written reasons for all reviewable decisions (Recommendation 24).

- The ministry is tracking the number of applications it receives and whether they are approved, denied or abandoned.
- The ministry is using Statistics Canada data to compile a report on whether people who discontinue their income assistance applications move on to employment or educational programs within two months. It expects to complete and post this report on its website by the end of 2010.

The Ministry of Housing and Social Development continues to work on a number of our recommendations which have not yet been fully implemented. We are closely following developments in regard to the PPMB program, where progress has been slower than expected.

There are other recommendations, for example, recommendations 2 and 3 on applying for income assistance, where the ministry did not meet the timelines set out in the report. However the ministry has confirmed that it is still committed to completing them and we are continuing to monitor progress in these areas. Regular progress updates, along with our entire report, can be found on our website.

Implementation of Recommendations in Special Report No. 31- Winning Fair and Square: A Report on the British Columbia Lottery Corporation's Prize Payout Process

In May 2007 we issued *Winning Fair and Square: A Report on the British Columbia Lottery Corporation's Prize Payout Process*. This systemic report examined whether BCLC had adequate procedures for ensuring that its retailers and their employees paid the correct amounts to the rightful owners of winning tickets. The report contained 23 recommendations addressed to BCLC and four others made to the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB) regarding its oversight of BCLC's retail network.

Our recommendations addressed the following areas: the collection of information, the lottery validation process, compliance and enforcement and the complaints process.

BCLC and GPEB accepted all the recommendations. At the time this annual report was published, 26 had been implemented, with BCLC taking steps to implement the remaining recommendation.

Some of the steps BCLC has taken to implement our recommendations are as follows:

- It developed and now maintains a comprehensive database of lottery retailers and their employees.
- It now requires all lottery retailers to pass a test and be certified by BCLC.
- It implemented a "No Play at Work" policy that prohibits lottery retailers and their employees from purchasing, playing or validating their personal lottery tickets at their place of work.
- It has now ensured that Check-A-Ticket terminals, which allow players to check their own tickets, are available at every retail lottery location in B.C. As of January 2010, the terminals can also be used to check Scratch & Win tickets.

Some of the steps GPEB has taken to implement our recommendations are as follows:

- It created its own separate and comprehensive registration program for lottery retailers.
- It implemented a comprehensive inspection program for retailers.
- It enhanced its independent investigation program.
- It completed reviews, and where necessary, further investigated all known multiple wins by retailers that took place between 2000 and 2006.

Our entire report can be found on our website. BCLC also posts updates on the Player First section of its website.

Looking Ahead

To look ahead we first need to look back and see the progress that the office has made over the past five years. 2006/07 marked the end of a period of significant contraction for the office. Since then the office has restored its services in all areas of its mandate; seen an increase in intake of 30 per cent; established a small, but very active systemic investigation team; initiated a highly successful early resolution process; and slowly increased our preventative education and outreach activities to authorities, complainants and advocacy groups.

Over the past two years, however, our energies have of necessity been focussed on managing increasing demands within fixed resources. While we have managed to do this, a "maintain the status quo approach" will not allow us to continue to improve public administration in British Columbia. Rather, it risks the office slipping backwards, away from the progress it has made during the past four years.

Consequently for the next two years, and within the resources available to us, we want to increase our focus on outreach, education and prevention. Working with authorities and other agencies, through training and through better dissemination of the results of our individual and systemic investigations, we believe that we can improve the understanding of the requirements of administrative fairness within organizations; work with them to improve their processes; and through successes in this area, change the nature and number of complaints that must come to our office for resolution. In doing this we must, at the same time, remain fully available to those who need our assistance, as well as embody the principles of administrative fairness that we seek to inspire in others.

This is to commend your office, and specifically (ombudsperson officer), for your efficient and speedy handling of the above complaint … Though the file was lengthy and somewhat complex, her analysis of the problem was thorough, and her grasp of the essential issue was immediate and impressive. Her communications were clear, direct and to the point. …In a matter of days she obtained information which we had unsuccessfully sought over a period of several months. It was a pleasure dealing with her. We are very grateful for her help and for the services provided by your office.

From a thank-you letter sent to us in 2009/10

Case Summaries – Introduction

In the following pages you will read about some of the individual cases we dealt with in 2009/10.[3] In selecting these cases we have tried to show the diversity of the work done by our early resolution and ombudsperson officers, as well as provide people with an understanding of what fair administrative practice requires public authorities to do.

> *[Ombudsperson officer] was the ombudsman's representative on a problem that I was having and I must commend her. She has proven to be an absolutely awesome representative and I cannot speak more highly of her. She was very professional and gracious.*
>
> *From a thank-you letter sent to us in 2009/10*

The cases included in this section are only a fraction of those we investigated during the year, but they do demonstrate the breadth of the issues we deal with, including ones that relate to people's homes, health and livelihood.

Our early resolution process may help if you are a small business owner who is having a problem getting your liquor licence transferred; a student who is experiencing hardship due to delays in the processing of your student loan; or an income assistance recipient who is in pain and unable to get dental treatment funded locally due to an outdated restriction on your file. These are three of the over 300 early resolution files we closed last year.

The more than 2,200 files dealt with by our ombudsperson officers produced positive outcomes for both British Columbians and public agencies. Our office has always seen itself as having a special relationship with and responsibility to those in our society who, for a variety of reasons, may face particular challenges in dealing with public agencies, so you will find specific sections that highlight cases dealing with children and youth, seniors, and those British Columbians who rely upon income and community supports to function in their daily lives. We assisted the parent of an autistic child who needed post-operative physiotherapy; a mother looking for options to maintain contact with her children; and a foster parent caught in a procedural bind. Whether you are a senior who cannot get reimbursed for the eyeglasses that were lost during an ambulance ride; a senior living in an extended care facility who finds your rest is disturbed by noisy neighbours; or someone who is trying without success to explain why your family member should be entitled to a reduced rate in a care facility, you may come to us with your problems. We also helped a homeless man get credit for money he had already paid so he could keep his driver's licence and a man to get support to travel to his dialysis treatments reinstated.

> *Thank you [early resolution officer] for the extremely efficient and effective service your office recently provided to me. I had been trying to resolve an issue with MSP for over a year and you managed to do it in a day! Your website form for complaints is great, and your phone follow-up happened very quickly. I was delighted by the service you provided.*
>
> *From a thank-you message sent to us in 2009/10*

[3] We have changed the names of the people in all our case summaries to protect their confidentiality. In most cases we have identified the complaint as originating in one of four broad regions: the Lower Mainland, which includes Greater Vancouver, the Fraser Valley as far as Hope and the Squamish area; Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast, which also includes the Gulf Islands; Northern B.C., which includes Prince George and everything north of it; and the Interior which includes everything south of Prince George, except for the Lower Mainland.

Case Summaries – Introduction

Not surprisingly we also work to resolve a number of work and business related cases: An injured worker who needed special support to feed herself after surgery; a business owner who was paying more premiums than he should for workers' compensation coverage; and an oyster farmer who was frustrated by the time taken to consider and approve his application — all brought their problems to us last year and we were able to assist in finding a resolution.

> *I commend her for excellent work on my behalf. By her persistence, determination and continued interest against a difficult process, she was able to bring about a successful favourable resolution to the case. Please convey this message to her with a big, big thank you [ombudsperson officer] for your fine work, much appreciated. I will always recommend you!*
>
> *From a thank-you message sent to us in 2009/10*

We also are an important route to access to administrative justice for newer British Columbians who have moved here from other parts of the world and are trying to understand how things work here. A person who recently moved to Canada came to us for help in getting ICBC to give him appropriate credit for his safe driving record overseas; a woman whose immigration status had not been properly updated in the health system computers needed our assistance to get reimbursement for money she had paid to visit a health clinic; and the son of an older woman who did not speak English well came to us for help in getting a cheque reissued when his mother had not cashed the original one because of concerns about whether an offer of settlement was valid. In each case both the individual who complained and the public authority he or she dealt with came away with a better understanding of what good administrative processes requires and what fair treatment looks like.

It can sometimes be easy when looking at resolutions for individual cases to lose sight of the wider role that our office plays in supporting good public administration and ensuring that the precepts of administrative law are respected.

A number of the cases included in this year's report highlight this aspect of our work. It may be a situation where we work with an authority to improve accessibility for the visually impaired, or an investigation where the authority realized that it did have jurisdiction to deal with a complaint if it considered it from a different perspective. Public administration was improved when we discussed with a ministry how its computer codes were limiting its ability to help its clients and it was able to modify its processes to help one person and avoid other people being caught by the same restriction. Resolving the health and cleanliness concerns of a young person about a vehicle that was taking him to court led to a review and changes by an authority to its practices on cleaning vehicles, and improvements to information provided during a public consultation process will make it easier for those affected to participate in the process.

Ultimately, whether we are dealing with individuals with concerns about the situations they find themselves in, or a large public authority which is looking for a fairer way of dealing with its clients, our goal is always the same: to improve public administration in British Columbia. We believe this makes an important contribution to a civil society.

Case Summaries – Early Resolution

Lifting restriction on treatment helps man in pain

Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

Garth received medical benefits through the Ministry of Housing and Social Development and was in a great deal of pain when he called us due to a problem with his teeth. Garth said he could not seek treatment because a restriction on his ministry file meant he was only allowed to be treated by a dentist in the town he had lived in more than four years ago.

We contacted a supervisor in the ministry office where Garth now lived. She confirmed that a restriction had been put on his file in 2005 and that it appeared this was done to protect Garth after he lost some identification. After we explained that Garth had been living in another city for more than four years and was in urgent need of dental care, the supervisor contacted the appropriate departments and arranged to have the restriction removed. She then contacted Garth and let him know that he could now seek dental care where he lived.

Woman thrilled by billing fix

Health Insurance BC
Out of Province

When Inge moved to the United States in 2007, she cancelled her coverage under the provincial Medical Services Plan (MSP). However, two years later, Inge once again began receiving monthly bills from MSP. She returned these each month with a written explanation of why she was not paying them. She also telephoned Health Insurance BC (HIBC), which is the agency that administers MSP, and staff there said they would correct the problem. When she continued to receive the bills, Inge tried again to call HIBC but had not been able to get through. She called our office to see if we could help.

When we contacted HIBC, its staff responded quickly. An HIBC employee called Inge that same day and was not only able to resolve her concerns, but also discovered that she had a $500 credit. When we next spoke with Inge, her first words were "I'm so thrilled."

Student relieved by news that loan is on the way

StudentAid BC, Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

Giles was frustrated by delays in getting his student loan processed. The school year had already started when he called us and the delay was causing him extreme financial hardship.

Before StudentAid BC could process Giles' loan, they needed a copy of his picture identification. Giles had already faxed and e-mailed them scanned versions of his identification three separate times but was still being told they had not received it and therefore would not process his loan.

We contacted StudentAid BC the same day that we heard from Giles and asked a supervisor to review his file. She immediately found his file and confirmed that Giles' identification was there. She made arrangements to fast-track the processing of Giles' student loan.

We called Giles back the next day to let him know what we'd done.

Worried woman relieved when MSP problem fixed

Health Insurance BC
Lower Mainland

Sonya had a low income and so could not afford to pay the full amount for her insurance coverage under the provincial Medical Services Plan (MSP). She had applied to MSP for a reduction, but the processing of this paperwork seemed to have been delayed. She had sent her application to Health Insurance BC (HIBC), which is the agency that administers MSP, two months prior to calling our office and had not yet been approved.

Meanwhile, Sonya had received a collections letter telling her she had to pay her MSP bill. When she sent her information to HIBC again, staff there told her it would take several more months to process her application. She was very concerned about the delay and the threat of collection.

We got in touch with a staff member at HIBC and asked her to review the matter. She found Sonya's paperwork and processed it immediately. She then contacted Sonya, apologized for the delay and ensured that HIBC records were updated to reflect that Sonya was eligible for premium assistance and did not owe any money.

Sonya thanked us for our quick assistance and was relieved that the matter had been resolved.

FMEP staff consider special circumstances

Family Maintenance Enforcement Program
Lower Mainland

Lee came to see us at one of the regular mobile intake sessions that we hold in the Lower Mainland.

He owed money to the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEP) and as a result was prevented from obtaining a passport. This was a problem for him because he wanted to explore a job opportunity in the United States and also to visit his father's grave there. He told us that he had repeatedly contacted the FMEP and asked its staff to consider his circumstances and remove the restriction. The FMEP had refused to do so unless Lee supplied a letter from his current employer indicating that he needed a passport to travel to the United States for work. Lee did not want his employer to know that he owed a debt to the FMEP, as he feared it would endanger his current employment.

We contacted a supervisor at the FMEP and explained Lee's circumstances. She reviewed his file and agreed to remove the restriction. She said the FMEP did not wish to jeopardize Lee's current or future job opportunities and would not prevent him from applying for a passport. She contacted Lee and advised him of her decision.

Call about application helps northern business owner

Liquor Control and Licensing Branch, Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Northern B.C.

Michelle owned a restaurant in a small northern community and was proud of the contribution her business made to the local economy. In late December, she had moved her restaurant to a new location. In early January, she applied to the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch to transfer her liquor licence to the new venue. By the time she called us in early March, she was frustrated because the branch had not yet given her permission for the licence transfer.

Our office offered to contact the branch to find out when it might issue Michelle's licence. When we did so, we learned that the branch was processing her application, but that in order to proceed, it needed to carry out an inspection and to get a copy of the new restaurant's floor plan. Michelle faxed the branch a revised floor plan and the final inspection took place shortly after that. Michelle had her licence within two weeks of her call to us — just in time to allow her to serve a conference group arriving in town. She said this would benefit her whole community.

Man gets his day in court after three-year wait

Court Services, Ministry of Attorney General
Lower Mainland

Jag contacted us in November 2009 because he had been waiting almost three years for a court date to dispute a $45 traffic ticket. He had contacted Court Services many times over the previous two years and been told that he could either apply to have the ticket dismissed due to the delay or continue waiting for a court date. He didn't think he should have to spend more time to apply for dismissal or incur further expense when the original ticket was for only $45. He believed it was unreasonable that he had been made to wait three years for a court date for a traffic ticket.

We contacted a supervisor at Court Services and asked her to review Jag's file. She did so immediately and agreed to provide him with a court date. She confirmed Jag's court date had been set for February 2010 and notified him of this.

Jag was pleased that he would finally have his day in court.

Ministry pays for senior's dentures

Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

Carol, who was in her 60s and suffering from various medical problems, contacted us because she was tired of waiting for the Ministry of Housing and Social Development to reimburse her for her dentures.

Carol's federal pension was supplemented by the Ministry of Housing and Social Development. In 2008, she had all her teeth extracted and then paid for new dentures herself. She later learned that the ministry would have covered part of the cost of the dentures. She had written several letters since then, in hopes of being reimbursed. She had sent her most recent letter to the minister's office a month before she called us and had not received a response.

We contacted the minister's office to inquire about Carol's letter. Staff there confirmed that a response was in the works and that Carol should have it within the next week or two.

Soon after this Carol let us know that she had received the response from the minister's office and — even better — had also been sent a reimbursement cheque for more than $500.

Refund cheque sent by courier after call

Revenue Services of BC
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

Gabriella contacted us in mid-February 2010 because she had been waiting for her Medical Services Plan (MSP) refund from Revenue Services of BC (RSBC) since November 2009.

Gabriella said she had contacted RSBC more than once since November to ask about the status of her refund. RSBC always assured her that her cheque would be mailed.

We contacted RSBC to find out what was happening with Gabriella's refund. We learned that an RSBC agent had failed to put in Gabriella's original request for a refund in October 2009 and that was why it had been delayed. As a result of our call, RSBC authorized a manual cheque to be couriered to Gabriella within the next ten days.

Ten days later, Gabriella contacted us to say that she had in fact received her refund.

Complaint results in quick response from WorkSafeBC

WorkSafeBC

Interior

Duncan, who was on a disability pension from WorkSafeBC due to a past injury, contacted us because WorkSafeBC had told him he needed to have an employability assessment. However, six months later, the assessment still had not happened and Duncan had been unable to get clear answers from WorkSafeBC on when it would.

We contacted a complaints officer at WorkSafeBC who reviewed Duncan's file immediately. After doing so, she said his file had been dormant for several months and that the office that was dealing with it had been short-staffed. As a result of our call, she had arranged for a manager to contact Duncan to explain the reason for the delay and offer him an apology. A new vocational rehabilitation consultant was assigned to Duncan and would be contacting him promptly to arrange for his assessment.

Duncan was very happy that WorkSafeBC was once again actively working on his file.

CLBC provides retroactive funding for physiotherapy

Community Living BC
Lower Mainland

Janis thought Community Living BC (CLBC) had treated her unfairly by not informing her about a government program that might have covered the cost of physiotherapy for her disabled son. CLBC is a provincial Crown agency that provides programs and services to people with developmental disabilities.[4]

Janis had a 10-year-old son who received autism funding and other services through CLBC. In June 2008, her son had an operation and required post-surgical physiotherapy. Janis said she had approached CLBC for funding for the physiotherapy at that time and was told to submit a treatment plan. She did so, and in the meantime arranged for the physiotherapist to continue treatment without payment. She also asked her physiotherapist to submit the treatment invoices to CLBC.

Several months later, CLBC told Janis that it did not provide funding for physiotherapy. Then, in January 2009, CLBC told Janis that her son might be eligible for assistance through the At Home Program, which does provide funding for physiotherapy. In both 2008 and 2009, CLBC was responsible for administering applications for this program and for providing the public with information about it.

Janis applied to the program on behalf of her son and he was accepted in March. Unfortunately for Janis, the At Home Program did not provide physiotherapy funding retroactively, so she was not reimbursed for the services already provided to her son. Janis thought this was unfair since she would have applied to the At Home Program earlier had CLBC made her aware of it.

We investigated whether CLBC had taken a reasonable approach to informing Janis about the At Home Program. As part of this process, we reviewed CLBC's file. We also reviewed information from the physiotherapist, which appeared to support Janis' statement that she had told CLBC about her son's need for physiotherapy in June 2008. Given these circumstances, we suggested CLBC staff consider providing retroactive physiotherapy funding for the period between June and November 2008. CLBC agreed and paid the physiotherapist $1,900, which covered the entire cost of the treatment.

Reasons for suspension of visits clarified

Ministry of Children and Family Development
Interior

Haley believed that the Ministry of Children and Family Development had changed the arrangements for her access visits with her children, who were in their father's custody, without giving her a good reason. She thought this might be because she had made an allegation that a particular social worker was using drugs. Haley also told us that she did not want to be involved with the ministry any more.

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[4] Services for children and youth with special needs and their families or caregivers were transferred to the Ministry of Children and Family Development, effective November 1, 2009.

We contacted the ministry to learn what its view of the situation was. When we did so, ministry staff explained that they were involved on a voluntary basis to support Haley's relationship with her children. Ministry staff said they had put Haley's unsupervised visits with her children on hold due to their recent concerns over her possible drug use, as well as her sometimes impulsive and violent behaviour. Ministry staff said they had informed Haley that they needed to meet with her before they could consider resuming these visits. They also said that these concerns had arisen before Haley had made the allegations about the social worker, which they had investigated and found to be unsubstantiated. Ministry staff also said that Haley could continue to attend other supervised visits with her children, which occurred at a different location.

When we spoke to Haley again, she confirmed that she was aware the ministry wanted to meet with her and the reasons why. Ministry staff also said that if Haley met with them, they would ensure she was aware that, because the children were in their father's custody, the ministry was only providing services to her on a voluntary basis. As we were satisfied that the ministry's willingness to discuss its involvement with Haley and the reasons for suspending her visits was a reasonable resolution, we closed our file.

Youth's complaint results in new policy

Court Services, Ministry of Attorney General
Lower Mainland

Frank, who was in a youth custody facility, contacted us because he was not satisfied with the way Sheriff Services staff responded to his concerns about the cleanliness of the vehicle used to take him to court. Sheriff Services are provided by the Court Services Branch of the Ministry of Attorney General. Frank told us the vehicle had smelled very bad and that he had noticed large amounts of saliva and other bodily fluids on its floor.

Over a week had passed between Frank's trip and the date he called us. Given this length of time, we could not determine the actual condition of the particular vehicle on the day in question. Our office did agree to investigate whether Sheriff Services had a fair and reasonable process for making sure that the vehicles used to transport people are clean. As part of this process, we reviewed existing Sheriff Services policies and practices.

Sheriff Services staff took Frank's complaint as an opportunity to consider and update their practices on cleaning escort vehicles. Staff informed us that they would create a policy requiring escort vehicles to be cleaned at least bi-weekly, as well as before reuse whenever a compartment was contaminated during an escort.

Frank was satisfied that Sheriff Services created a specific policy to address the routine cleaning of escort vehicles and which covered the circumstances in which he had found himself.

Options and limits clarified for mother of troubled teen

Ministry of Children and Family Development
Northern B.C.

Iona's teenage daughter had mental health and behavioural issues, which Iona didn't think the Ministry of Children and Family Development was responding to appropriately. She wanted the ministry to provide more services for her daughter.

Iona said she had asked the ministry for assistance a number of times but had only been offered services that would not be helpful.

We spoke to one of the ministry's team leaders about Iona's complaint. The team leader said the ministry had offered various services to both Iona and her daughter and they had declined these offers. The team leader also explained that although Iona wanted her daughter to undergo a psychological assessment, the ministry could not force her teenage daughter to participate in such an assessment, or to accept other services, if she was unwilling to do so.

We asked whether the ministry was willing to send Iona a letter that clearly explained these options and limitations, and the team leader agreed this could be done. Ministry staff wrote to Iona and explained the ministry's role, what services it had offered and what assistance it could provide. While we understood why Iona was frustrated and upset, we could not conclude that the ministry had acted unfairly towards her.

Ministry agrees to consider grandmother as a caregiver

Ministry of Children and Family Development
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

Lucy was a mother whose children had been in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development for some time. She contacted us because she didn't think the ministry had fully considered or explored the possibility of placing her children with their grandmother, instead of with adoptive parents.

Lucy was very concerned about keeping her connection with her children and so she had been upset when ministry staff notified her that they were placing them with an adoptive family. Even though she still hoped that her mother could for care for the children and believed her mother was willing to do so, Lucy had been unable to convince the social worker involved to consider this option.

We called a senior regional official about Lucy's concerns and he agreed to discuss them with his staff. He then informed us that he had asked his staff to meet with Lucy's mother about her willingness to care for the children and to complete a formal assessment of her as a caregiver. The director said that the ministry would be notifying the prospective adoptive parents that the adoption process was on hold while it took these steps, which it would complete within 30 days. The director also informed us that he had asked an uninvolved staff person to participate in the discussions with Lucy's mother, so that everyone would be assured that the ministry was conducting an objective assessment.

These actions addressed Lucy's concern that the ministry had not given appropriate consideration to placing her children with their grandmother.

Fostering contract problem resolved

Ministry of Children and Family Development
Lower Mainland

Jacqueline said the Ministry of Children and Family Development had not paid her for taking care of one of two teenage girls she was fostering in her home and that the amount of funding she was receiving did not match the children's needs.

At the time Jacqueline contacted us she had been fostering one of the girls for almost three months. She had not yet been paid for that work and didn't have a contract for that child. She also said that both girls had higher needs than the ministry had classified her as able to care for. Jacqueline was classified as a restricted foster parent but thought that given the high needs of the children she was caring for, she should be classified at Level 3, which is higher. Being classified at a lower level resulted in Jacqueline receiving less support than she thought was fair.

We contacted a manager at the ministry and outlined Jacqueline's situation and concerns. The manager agreed to look into these issues. Shortly after we spoke with her, the manager confirmed that the ministry had completed Jacqueline's contract and made a payment to her. The manager said staff may not have entered her contract into the computer system before the necessary cut-off date, which could have caused the delay in payment. Because Jacqueline knew the girls before she agreed to foster them, it appeared that the ministry had appropriately classified Jacqueline as a restricted foster parent. The ministry said that if Jacqueline was interested in fostering generally, she was welcome to apply. At that time the ministry would consider, based on her experience, whether she should be classified as a specialized foster home and assigned a category level. To address Jacqueline's immediate concerns about the children's needs, staff agreed to meet with her to discuss whether additional financial or other types of support might be provided. Jacqueline indicated that she understood the foster home classifications and was satisfied with the ministry's response. We believed the ministry's actions were a reasonable response to Jacqueline's complaint and so we closed our file.

ICBC Reissues Cheque to Resolve Complaint

Insurance Corporation of British Columbia
Lower Mainland

Jing-Wei and her son Gavin approached us after they had been unsuccessful in their attempts to have the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) reissue a cheque that was originally sent to Jing-Wei to settle her injury claim. Jing-Wei communicated with ICBC and us through her adult son, Gavin, since English was not her first language.

Jing-Wei had been in a car accident in 2005. In April 2007, ICBC sent her a cheque for approximately $9,000 to settle her injury claim. Although she was in agreement with this settlement, she was confused by a mistake ICBC had made on the invoice attached to the cheque. The invoice said that the cheque was for a full and final settlement of all claims regarding her 2007 accident. She did not want to sign the attached release in case this error regarding the date of her accident invalidated ICBC's offer of settlement.

Jing-Wei was also moving at the time she received the cheque, which complicated matters for her. She did not attempt to resolve her concerns about the cheque until October 2008. When she tried to cash the cheque then, her bank rejected it because it had been issued more than a year earlier.

When her son asked ICBC to reissue the cheque, ICBC refused to do so because the two-year period for launching legal action had expired. Since Jing-wei had not signed the release within the two-year limitation period, ICBC maintained that she had not accepted its proposed settlement. When Gavin contacted ICBC's customer relations and review department, the claim centre and ICBC's legal department reviewed the matter. However, ICBC did not change its position, and so Gavin contacted us on Jing-Wei's behalf.

While neither Jing-Wei nor her son had tried to resolve her concerns about ICBC's cheque until it was too late to do so, ICBC knew that Jing-Wei had difficulty communicating in English and still made no attempt to contact her to follow up on why she had not sent a signed release, even though she appeared to agree with the settlement. We suggested ICBC reconsider its refusal to reissue Jing-Wei's cheque.

ICBC referred this matter to one of its committees, but that committee also refused to recommend that the cheque be reissued. We continued to pursue this matter and again suggested ICBC reconsider its decision, on the basis of the special communications challenges Jing-Wei faced when ICBC sent her incorrect information on its invoice.

After another review, ICBC agreed to reissue Jing-Wei's cheque and send her a letter of apology. When we contacted Gavin, he said that he had been "almost speechless" when his mother received the call from ICBC to let her know that a new cheque was available for her to pick up at ICBC's claim centre. He told us that they had almost given up hope of settling this matter, and that his mother was very pleased with this outcome. He assured us that he would be accompanying Jing-Wei to the claims centre and immediately afterwards to the bank so that the new cheque was cashed promptly.

Case Summaries – Driving and Transportation

Recent immigrant gets bigger safe driving discount

ICBC

Lower Mainland

Hassan came to us after having recently moved to Canada from a country in the Middle East. Since he was not fluent in English, he communicated with us through another person, which is something our office can arrange to do when necessary.

Hassan had brought car insurance documents from his former country with him and they showed he had a safe driving record of several years. But when ICBC staff saw these documents, they were only willing to give him credit for one year of safe driving and so only gave him a five per cent reduction on his insurance premiums. He didn't think that ICBC staff had properly understood his driving record. Since he had been driving safely for a number of years, he didn't think it was fair for them to give him such a low discount.

When Hassan complained to us, we did a careful review of all his documents. After doing so we thought that ICBC may not have fully understood how his insurance had worked in his home country, and consequently didn't realize how long he had been driving safely. We talked to ICBC staff about this and they agreed to look at his papers again. When finished this review, they agreed that their original decision had been based on a misunderstanding and decided to give Hassan a discount on his insurance based on three extra years of safe driving. ICBC also gave him a refund backdated to the time that it first had the information showing his eligibility, plus interest. Hassan was very happy with this.

Consumer Protection BC improves communication with the public

Consumer Protection BC

Lower Mainland

Gina contacted us because she was dissatisfied with the explanation that Consumer Protection BC gave her when it discontinued its investigation of two companies involved in the seizure of her car.[5] Consumer Protection BC is a non-profit corporation established by the province in 2004 which has its goal the protection of consumers and the oversight of business practices in the province.

By the time she came to us, Gina had started court action against the companies and Consumer Protection BC was reluctant to get involved at that stage. However, the agency did agree that it could have provided Gina with a better explanation of why it had closed her investigation file nine months earlier, before she had started her court action.

After we discussed Gina's complaint with staff at Consumer Protection BC, they agreed to prepare a case assessment report for her that explained the agency's mandate, the steps it had taken to investigate her initial complaint about the seizure, and why it had discontinued that investigation. Gina was satisfied with this additional information.

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[5] Consumer Protection BC was formerly known as the Business Practice and Consumer Protection Authority.

Consumer Protection BC also changed its processes to reflect the lessons it had learned as a result of this complaint. In order to prevent further miscommunications, the agency decided that its staff would prepare and send case assessment reports to complainants when closing complex files. We were pleased that Consumer Protection BC took this approach to improving complaints resolution.

OSMV takes action to help homeless man

Office of the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

Gareth came to us because he thought that it was unfair that he would have to pay $31 to get a new Class 5 driver's licence when he had already paid for a Class 2 commercial licence that would have been valid for two more years, if ICBC had not cancelled it.

At the time that he first called us, Gareth had until recently held a commercial Class 2 driver's licence, but he was having increasing problems with his vision due to a cataract. The Office of the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles (OSMV) had sent Gareth two letters telling him that he needed to pass a medical exam in order to keep his Class 2 licence. When he didn't respond, the OSMV directed the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) to cancel his licence, even though Gareth remained eligible to apply for a Class 5 licence, which has lower vision requirements. Gareth knew that the new Class 5 licence would cost him $31.

Gareth had stopped working since obtaining his Class 2 licence and was now on very limited income, so paying the extra money would have been a hardship for him. His circumstances deteriorated further after he contacted us. He became homeless and then discovered that he needed a valid piece of provincial identification, such as a driver's licence, in order to cash his pension cheques.

When we contacted the OSMV about Gareth's complaint, we learned that the *Motor Vehicle Fees Regulation* required that Gareth be charged $31 for a new licence. OSMV staff said they had no way of crediting Gareth for the remaining time on his Class 2 licence.

We reviewed the *Motor Vehicle Act* and concluded that the OSMV in fact had two options. It could direct ICBC (as the licensing agent) to cancel a licence either with or without requiring ICBC to issue a different class of licence. We agreed that when ICBC was directed to cancel a licence, an individual in Gareth's circumstance would have to pay $31 for a new licence. But if the OSMV directed ICBC to cancel Gareth's Class 2 licence and issue him a different class of licence, Gareth would not have to pay the $31.

We also knew that the OSMV staff were not aware of Gareth's financial circumstances when they directed ICBC to cancel his licence, so we explained his situation to them. We then suggested OSMV staff review their earlier decision, in light of Gareth's financial situation.

OSMV staff reviewed the wording of the *Motor Vehicle Act* and agreed that it did give them the ability to direct ICBC to issue a different class of licence at no cost to a driver, under exceptional circumstances. The OSMV then directed ICBC to do this and arranged for Gareth to pick up his Class 5 licence at an ICBC Driver Services Centre. OSMV staff also thanked us for identifying this provision of the *Motor Vehicle Act*, as they had not considered this option before.

Gareth was pleasantly surprised to learn that he wouldn't have to pay for a new licence and that he would soon have the identification he needed to cash his cheques.

Sometimes simple things are not that simple

Revenue Services of BC
Lower Mainland

Ivan phoned us because he was at his wit's end. He explained that Revenue Services of BC (RSBC) kept on sending reports to a credit bureau stating that he had an outstanding student loan debt of $90, even though he had already paid this debt in full. Although a small amount, the effect on his credit rating was disastrous. Ivan said that until his credit report was fixed he couldn't even rent an apartment. He had been trying for months to get RSBC, which is the provincial government agency responsible for collecting debts, to do something about this.

In our investigation we learned that interest had been applied to Ivan's debt by mistake. Reports that reflected this were then automatically sent to the credit bureau. After Ivan contacted RSBC agents about the problem, they cancelled the outstanding balance of his debt and informed the credit bureau. Everything should have been fine after that except that, unknown to the RSBC agents, cancelling the debt sent an automated message to the credit bureau saying that the debt had been "written off." The credit bureau believed this message meant that Ivan had never paid the debt and was therefore a bad credit risk.

When Ivan later contacted RSBC about the continuing problems, it again asked the credit bureau to fix the problem. But two months later, Ivan's credit rating was still incorrect.

Since RSBC is overseen by the Ministry of Finance, we contacted a supervisor at that ministry about Ivan's frustrating situation. The supervisor and RSBC agreed to call the credit bureau to find out what had gone wrong. It turns out that the credit bureau had not processed Ivan's second request properly. Once the credit bureau realized its error, it zeroed Ivan's debt and his credit rating was fixed.

RSBC wrote to Ivan apologizing for the delay in fixing the problem and for the series of events that resulted in the delay. Ivan was happy that the problem was behind him and appreciated the apology.

School district clarifies reason for busing decision

School District 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap)
Interior

Helsa complained that her school district had denied her request for her kindergarten children be allowed to ride the school bus to a half-day French immersion program outside their catchment area.

Helsa explained that when she first contacted her school district office to ask about busing, staff had told her that her children could ride the bus, if space was available. Based on this information, Helsa made arrangements to meet the district's requirements for supervision and pickup of kindergarten children. However, after she informed the district's transportation department that her children would be riding the bus, staff called her back to say that because her children would be on the bus for more than hour and that was against the district's policy, they would not be allowed to ride the bus to the program. Helsa then discussed the matter with another senior official at the district, who gave her a different reason why her children could not use the bus. This official told her that since her children were half-day students, they

could only ride the bus if they were going directly to or from a program. This wasn't the case for Helsa's children, since the route involved a transfer along the way. Helsa then appealed the district's decision to the elected board of education. The board denied her request to appeal because it did not consider the decision to be appealable.

In the course investigating Helsa's complaint, we brought up the apparent inconsistency between the different explanations given to Helsa by district staff. The district then agreed to send her a letter clarifying its reasons for not allowing Helsa's children to use the bus to get to the program. We reviewed that letter and were satisfied that it did provide clear and appropriate reasons. We also talked to the district about our concerns over the denial of Helsa's appeal request. We consulted with staff about their general approach to appeals and how these processes should be conducted in order to meet the test of fairness.

Helsa wrote back to the district after receiving its letter and was able to arrange for her children to use the afternoon bus the next year. She was satisfied with this outcome and since the district had provided written clarification of the reasons for its decision, we considered this complaint settled.

District takes steps to address bullying concerns

School District 37 (Delta)
Lower Mainland

Harvey came to us because he didn't believe his school district had done enough in response to his child being bullied at school.

We contacted a senior official at the district about Harvey's concerns. She explained that she had been in communication with Harvey several times about these issues, and had also met with his family and the police liaison and principal at the child's school. While she could not share information with Harvey about all the actions the district had taken regarding other students, the detailed information she provided to us satisfied us that the school and the district had acted appropriately.

The official confirmed that the district had taken a number of steps to support Harvey's child, including transferring the child to another school. The district had also provided an educational assistant to support the child's transition and to monitor behaviour on the school grounds. Another step underway was the completion of a psychological and educational assessment to determine and plan for the supports the child would need the following year. The district had also arranged workshops for both parents and students on student safety and bullying issues. We believed the district's actions addressed Harvey's complaints and so closed our file.

School district services explained for parent of allergic child

School District 79 (Cowichan Valley)

Hope called our office to complain about how School District 79 had responded to her request for help with home-schooling her child, who had very severe allergies.

Due to the severity of the allergies, the child was unable to attend public school in person, so Hope had been teaching her child at home, using distance education materials from another district. But it had become difficult for Hope to continue with this schooling without support from other adults, so she sought information from SD 79 on educational options for her child.

Hope first contacted the district's nursing support service. Staff confirmed that the school could not provide a completely allergen-free environment and referred her to student support services. Hope asked staff there whether the school district would consider subsidizing a tutor or part-time teacher to help her teach her child at home.

Hope told us that the school district had said no because her child could only receive the assistance of a tutor if the child was enrolled in regular elementary school with the district. Her child would have to attend school in person three days a week. Since her child's allergies prevented her from doing that, Hope believed the school district has not provided appropriate reasons for its decision.

When we contacted the school district to raise Hope's concerns, it appeared that there had been a misunderstanding. Staff said that the school district was not refusing to provide part-time instruction to her child at home. They told us that her child could be registered in a distance education program and in regular elementary school in the district at the same time. The school district said that registering her child in school would not mean she had to attend in person. The school district clarified that once registered, her child would be eligible for hospital homebound services to help Hope carry out the distance education program.

Since the school district had clarified its position and Hope would now be eligible to apply for the tutoring she had sought for her child, we informed Hope of this outcome and closed our file.

Case Summaries – Health

Man gets funding for dentures

Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Lower Mainland

John, who was on provincial income assistance, came to us after the Ministry of Housing and Social Development refused to pay for his dentures.

John explained that due to his medical history, his dentist believed that he needed an extended healing period to recover from the extraction of his teeth. John's dentist had told him to wait at least eight months after having his teeth removed before coming back for dentures. John then waited eight months before returning to have dentures installed. However, when he finally did return, the ministry denied his request to cover the costs of his dentures. He was told that this was because the ministry required dentures to be installed within six months of extraction.

After getting this news, John had asked his dentist to submit a letter confirming that he had advised him to wait at least eight months after extraction before getting dentures. But four months later, the ministry had still not approved John's funding. Meanwhile, John said his lack of teeth was seriously harming his job hunt, his ability to stay properly fed and his social life. He felt that it was unfair for the ministry to deny him funding for the dentures when he had just been following his dentist's advice.

We discussed John's situation with the ministry's Health Assistance Branch. Staff there agreed that the ministry had denied John's request based on the six-month time limit for denture installation that is set by legislation. They confirmed that they had received the letter from John's dentist, but said that because it was not accompanied by a current treatment plan from a denturist, they were unable to consider it. After discussions with us, ministry staff agreed that if John were to submit the dentist's letter again along with an estimate from a denturist they could consider making an exception to the six-month time limit, based on his special circumstances. The supervisor at the local ministry office agreed to assist John with this process.

One week later, the ministry approved the funding for John's dentures.

No free ride

BC Ambulance Service
Out of Province

Malcolm complained that the British Columbia Ambulance Service (BCAS) had billed him for a trip that he was told would be free.

Malcolm had been injured on a ski hill while visiting British Columbia. At the time of his accident, a paramedic told him he could get a free ride to the hospital because the ambulance was already there for another person. He took the ride and was surprised when he later received a bill for $530. He complained to the BCAS and also formally appealed the bill, explaining that he was told he would not be charged. However, the BCAS said the bill was valid and he had to pay it.

Malcolm contacted us because he did not believe BCAS' response to his complaint and appeal addressed the concerns he had raised and he didn't think he should have to pay $530 for a service that he was told would be free.

We agreed to investigate whether the BCAS had responded adequately to Malcolm's concerns. The BCAS confirmed to us that under its current complaint and appeal process, Malcolm's bill was valid and should be paid.

We reviewed and analyzed BCAS' complaints and appeals process and the applicable legislation and regulations. After our review, we questioned whether the regulations allowed the BCAS more discretion to adjust bills for service than it was currently exercising. The BCAS reviewed its process and, as a result, developed a new way of handling complaints and appeals. The new process includes a more thorough review of each individual situation and a broader exercise of discretion.

The BCAS then applied its new process to Malcolm's complaint and came up with a different decision. The BCAS reduced Malcolm's bill to $50 — an amount consistent with what he would have paid had he taken a taxi from the ski hill to the hospital, which was how he would have travelled if he had not been told the ambulance trip would be free.

The BCAS also sent Malcolm a letter that explained the reasons for its revised decision. Malcolm was pleased with the new decision and believed that the revised bill was fair and reasonable.

Malcolm was also pleased that the BCAS decision letter addressed him in a respectful and positive tone and clearly responded to the issues he had raised. He thanked our office for helping him. We were pleased that the BCAS responded to Malcolm's complaint and to our involvement in a way that led to improvements to its complaints and appeals process and to better service for anyone in a similar situation in the future.

Woman gets reasons and a refund

Revenue Services of BC
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

Hannah came to us because she had not been able to get the reimbursement she believed she was entitled to from Revenue Services of BC (RSBC).

Hannah had recently caught up with filing her income tax returns after being behind for several years. She had been able to prove her income back to 2000. However, since she had not filed income tax returns, Health Insurance BC had no information about her income during those years. She was therefore considered ineligible for assistance with paying her MSP premiums, and was expected to pay the full amount. When she did not pay, RSBC, which is the provincial agency responsible for collecting MSP debts, eventually proceeded with collection action against her.

After she filed her back taxes, Hannah had been able to show RSBC that her income level during those years had entitled her to lower MSP premiums. RSBC had then retroactively reimbursed her for some of the premiums she had paid, but not for an amount it had taken to satisfy a debt she had accrued before 2003.

When she called RSBC about this, Hannah was told that she would not be reimbursed for this amount because it was too old. She complained to us that RSBC had not given her a reasonable explanation as to why it would not return her money.

In the course of investigating Hannah's complaint, RSBC told us that the Medical Services Commission does not permit the Ministry of Health Services to provide retroactive premium assistance beyond six years, which in Hannah's case was the 2003 taxation year.

However, RSBC staff reviewed Hannah's account in response to our investigation, and found they were able to appropriately make a further adjustment, which resulted in her getting a refund of more than $300. RSBC also sent Hannah a detailed written explanation of her account.

But I don't need coverage!

Health Insurance BC
Out of Province

By the time Huck called us he was fed up.

He had moved to British Columbia for work in February and immediately applied for coverage under the Medical Services Plan (MSP). It was to take effect in June. Unfortunately for Huck, he quickly lost his job due to the recession and ended up moving back home to Ontario in May, before the coverage took effect. Before leaving the province, Huck had called Health Insurance BC (the agency that administers the Medical Services Plan) and told them to cancel his application. But eight months later, he was still getting bills for coverage from a collection agency. He didn't know what to do.

We contacted Health Insurance BC (HIBC) and confirmed that it had received Huck's instructions, yet had not cancelled his coverage until several months afterward. We also learned that Huck was still being billed for three months of coverage because in B.C., the policy is that residents who leave the province will continue to be covered by MSP for two months after they leave. This is done to make sure residents don't suffer a gap in their health insurance while waiting to qualify for coverage in another province. Even though Huck had asked to cancel his coverage and moved before it took effect, under HIBC's system, he was automatically covered for two months after he left, as well as the remainder of the month in which he cancelled.

We spoke with a senior advisor at HIBC and explained that Huck did not need coverage in B.C., since his time here was so short that his Ontario health plan had continued to cover him during that period.

After confirming that Huck and his partner had uninterrupted benefits in Ontario, the advisor cancelled his B.C. coverage. HIBC also made changes to allow better communication with other provinces in the future.

Case Summaries – Health

Senior reimbursed for lost eyeglasses — eventually

BC Ambulance Service
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

David contacted us because his elderly mother had lost her eyeglasses while in the process of being transferred by ambulance in October 2008. David's mother was on a fixed income and her glasses had been expensive, so he wanted the BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) to reimburse her for the cost of replacing them. He had been unable to get the BCAS to agree to this.

By the time he called us, David had already contacted many people, both at the BCAS and at the health care facilities his mother had been transported between. One of the people David had been in touch with was a BCAS employee who had agreed to review his concerns with her superintendent. When David contacted us in March 2009, he had not yet heard back from anyone at the BCAS and he was becoming frustrated by the time it was taking to resolve his concern.

We agreed to investigate David's complaint about delay and spoke to a BCAS policy analyst as part of this process. According to the analyst, the BCAS had been unable to confirm that its staff were responsible for losing the eyeglasses. The policy analyst had learned that the BCAS investigation had taken some time because the employees involved worked part-time and were only available for interviews on their scheduled shifts. We also learned that the superintendent of the employees had spent several weeks trying to get permission to pay for the missing eyeglasses. Then, just when he was told to go ahead, there was a change in their administration office, which resulted in the file being misplaced.

The policy analyst told us that the superintendent was sorry for the time it had taken to resolve David's concerns and that BCAS was willing to reimburse David's mother for the cost of replacing her eyeglasses. Both David and his mother were pleased with this outcome.

You can't fix what you don't know is broken

Health Insurance BC
Lower Mainland

Helen was very upset to find that most of her income tax refund had been taken to pay a $2,000 debt to the Medical Services Plan (MSP) that she did not even know she owed.

Helen's situation was partly a result of the fact that B.C. residents are covered by MSP even when they don't pay their premiums. While this ensures that residents always have health insurance, these unpaid premiums do become debts that the provincial government takes steps to collect, including by taking all or part of someone's income tax refund.

Staff at Health Insurance BC (HIBC), which is the agency that administers MSP, explained to us that they had sent Helen bills for premiums but when she did not pay them for three consecutive months, they stopped sending them. After the bills stopped arriving, Helen forgot about the premiums and her debt continued to build. She realized she should have done something about the premiums sooner but had been overwhelmed by other events in her life.

After learning of the debt, Helen phoned HIBC, and was told that her debt included MSP premiums for her ex-husband, from whom she had been separated for more than six years. Helen sent in a court document proving this, but HIBC would not accept it on the grounds that it had been signed six years after the separation. Helen was also upset because she realized that she should have been getting premium assistance during the six-year period that she didn't pay premiums, due to her low income at the time. She came to us for help.

We agreed to investigate whether it was fair for HIBC to bill Helen for her ex-husband's premiums. When we spoke to the people at HIBC we learned that they had not given Helen premium assistance because they believed she was still married and had not provided information about her husband's income. They explained that it is very important for people to notify HIBC of any change in their financial or family status or contact information because they rely on the information on file to set the level of premiums due.

As a result of our contact with HIBC staff about Helen's situation, they accepted the court proof of separation and refunded the premiums Helen had paid for her ex-husband. They also retroactively approved her for premium assistance for five of the six years under dispute. HIBC staff told Helen that if she sent in her tax form for the sixth year, they would set her premiums for that year based on her taxable income. As a result of these actions, the amount of debt that Helen was responsible for paying was greatly reduced.

CareCard fixed, visits paid for

Health Insurance BC
Interior

Izumi didn't know why her CareCard wasn't working. She had needed to go to a local walk-in clinic four times in the last few months and, because of the problems with her CareCard, ended up having to pay for all four visits herself. Izumi had tried to fix the issue with her CareCard on her own, but was unable to resolve the problem.

Health Insurance BC (HIBC) is the agency that administers the Medical Services Plan, including CareCards. We got in touch with the person at the Ministry of Health Services who is responsible for resolving HIBC problems and that person looked into the status of Izumi's Medical Services Plan (MSP) account. We discovered that Izumi's problems were due to the fact that her immigration status had recently changed but her MSP status had not been updated in the system to reflect this. The ministry representative then updated Izumi's status, which corrected the problems with her CareCard. We also found out that Izumi could ask the clinic she had visited to reimburse her for the times she was charged when her CareCard wasn't working.

Izumi tried to do this but came back to tell us that the clinic would not reimburse her for her previous visits. We raised this concern and HIBC staff called the clinic and arranged for its staff to resubmit the claims for Izumi's appointments.

Izumi later called to tell us that she had been reimbursed for the full amount she had paid for her visits and thanked us for our help.

Case Summaries – Health

Maybe if I ignore them they will stop calling...

Ministry of Finance
Interior

Jadzia contacted our office because she was very frightened about losing her trailer over an outstanding debt. She had received a final notice for an overdue hospital bill from the Ministry of Finance, but had no income and no idea how she could ever repay the debt. Jadzia said that she had not contacted the ministry, as she felt ashamed and thought that contacting them would just make things worse.

When we contacted the ministry we found out that staff there had tried to contact Jadzia by telephone and mail many times to explain the debt and her repayment options. We spoke to a senior supervisor about Jadzia's fear of making things worse, and her limited means to repay the debt. As a result of our call, the supervisor agreed to have a ministry representative phone Jadzia to discuss options with her. We talked to Jadzia later and confirmed that the ministry had accepted her proposal for a repayment schedule that she felt she could handle.

Review boards agree to give reasons

VIHA Patient Care Quality Review Board (Ministry of Health Services)
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

Gloria believed that the care her husband had received at a hospital run by the Vancouver Island Health Authority contributed to his death and she had complained about this to the patient care quality office within VIHA. She was not satisfied with that office's investigation of her complaint and so requested a review by the patient care quality review board for VIHA. Both patient care quality offices and patient care quality review boards were created in 2008 to deal with complaints about health care services delivered by health authorities.

Gloria contacted us after the board wrote to her to say that it agreed with the findings of the original investigation but did not tell her why. She was frustrated because she had been trying without success to get answers about her late husband's treatment, and now the board had given her an answer without reasons. It had concluded its letter by saying the matter was resolved.

When we called the board about Gloria's concerns, its staff said that they only gave reasons for decisions if the board had decided something needed to be changed. Since the board had found nothing wrong with the original investigation by the patient care quality office, it had not explained its decision. The board considered the matter resolved because its review was now over.

As a result of our involvement, the board wrote to Gloria and explained how it had considered her complaint and reached its conclusion. As well, the Patient Care Quality Review Boards Secretariat agreed that in future, all six review boards would give reasons for all their decisions, even if no recommendations were made. The secretariat also said it would make sure that future board letters clearly stated when reviews had been concluded and recommendations made.

Options for review now clearly explained by RTB

Residential Tenancy Branch
Interior

Ivy didn't like how the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) had handled her dispute with her landlord. She also thought it was unfair that the branch had rejected her application for a review of its decision on her dispute on the grounds that she had missed the deadline. She said the RTB had not even made her aware of its review process until after the deadline to apply for one had already passed.

When we contacted the RTB about Ivy's issue, staff there told us that the RTB doesn't require its dispute resolution officers to provide information about review options when they send their decisions to the people involved in a dispute. However, after discussing Ivy's complaint with us, the RTB agreed to reconsider this aspect of its process.

We followed up with the RTB three months later and had further discussions about how it could address this issue in a way that was both economical and effective. In response to our investigation, the RTB developed a one-page fact sheet to be sent out with all its decisions. This fact sheet provides information about options for review and highlights the fact that deadlines do apply to this process. The sheet also says where to go for more information.

We were satisfied this action would address the service that the RTB provides to people involved in tenancy disputes.

BC Housing improves move-out procedures for tenants

BC Housing
Lower Mainland

Hal complained that BC Housing had unfairly billed him for damage to his former apartment.

Hal had lived in his old apartment for about 18 years. When he moved out, BC Housing sent him a bill for damages, which he had been repaying in small installments each month. But Hal said that much of the damage was a result of normal wear and tear over those years and that he should not be responsible for those costs.

We agreed to investigate whether BC Housing had acted fairly when it billed Hal for the damage to his former apartment. As we reviewed BC Housing's file, it came to our attention that Hal had not given his written consent to the payment plan. We also noted that BC Housing had not gone to the Residential Tenancy Branch to seek an order for payment, as is required in these circumstances. When we brought these facts to the attention of BC Housing, staff there decided to write Hal to explain that he could dispute the bill. They did so, but in the end, Hal chose to continue paying the bill.

We also looked at whether BC Housing could improve its move-out procedures to avoid this problem in the future. BC Housing agreed to revise the form letter it sends to tenants who it believes have damaged an apartment. The revised letter more clearly explains the options available to those who wish to dispute a bill, and what steps BC Housing will take when tenants disagree with what they are charged.

BC Housing also told us that it would stop using the part on its standard move-out inspection form that asked tenants to agree to pay for cleaning and repairs to their apartment. BC Housing said that this part of the form might be misleading to tenants, because often the full cost of fixing the apartment is not known until several days after a tenant moves out.

BC Housing clarifies mortgage options for non-profit housing society

BC Housing
Interior

A representative of a non-profit low-income housing society complained to us that BC Housing had refused to let his group make additional payments or renegotiate the mortgage on its building. The society had financing available to pay off the mortgage faster and wanted to reduce its payments in order to finance additional projects. But when the society approached BC Housing, its representatives were told that the terms of their 50-year mortgage did not allow prepayment.

We agreed to look into whether BC Housing had given adequate and appropriate reasons for refusing to allow prepayment or renegotiation of the group's mortgage. We spoke to a senior official at BC Housing who explained that this was largely due to the fact that the mortgage was held by a federal agency and only administered by BC Housing. She did, however, agree to contact the society to clarify this and also to provide the society's directors with more information about options such as redevelopment, obtaining additional subsidies and the penalties for buying out the mortgage. We viewed BC Housing's response as reasonable and so, after informing the society, closed our file.

BC Hydro offers payment plan to resolve debt problem

BC Hydro
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

Jason called us because he thought it was unfair that BC Hydro was refusing to use his security deposit to settle his unpaid bills.

Jason's problems with BC Hydro started when he moved into the home of his ill brother to look after him. During this time, the person who was taking care of Jason's home had ignored the hydro bills that were piling up. Now Jason's power was about to be cut off. Jason wanted BC Hydro to use his security deposit to pay off his debt but it refused to do this. Jason said that the security deposit was his money and that, in this case, it should be used to pay off his debt.

During our investigation of Jason's complaint we reviewed his payment history, as well as the policy and rules that govern BC Hydro security deposits and overdue accounts. We learned that security deposits are required on all new accounts and that BC Hydro is unable to release these deposits until either the account is closed or the account holder has a 12-month record of on-time payment. Because Jason's account had been in arrears for almost a year, BC Hydro had to hold his deposit as security against future bills. We confirmed that BC Hydro had informed Jason of these rules when he had first asked about them, and that it was applying this policy consistently.

We did, however, explain Jason's special circumstances to a manager in BC Hydro's Customer Relations Department. The manager agreed to call Jason to discuss a mutually agreeable payment plan. When we spoke to Jason later, he confirmed that although he would have preferred to use his security deposit to offset the debt, he was pleased that he'd been able to work out a manageable payment plan — and even happier that his power was still on.

Rebate rules for condo owners reviewed

BC Hydro
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

James came to us because he disagreed with BC Hydro's decision not to give him a rebate on the energy-efficient freezer he had bought.

BC Hydro had denied James's application to the Power Smart Energy Star® Appliance Rebate Program on the grounds that he lived in a condominium and so instead of paying his hydro directly, he paid it indirectly through his strata corporation. James thought it was unfair for BC Hydro to make a distinction between different types of residential hydro accounts.

We agreed to investigate and asked BC Hydro questions about why it had denied James's rebate application. In the course of answering our questions, BC Hydro discovered that its staff had incorrectly interpreted the eligibility guidelines for this program. BC Hydro agreed that those who live in condominiums and pay hydro through their strata corporation were in fact eligible for rebates under the program, as long as they were billed at the residential rate.

As James's hydro was billed at the residential rate, BC Hydro sent James a written apology and a rebate cheque. BC Hydro also reviewed the program's eligibility guidelines with its staff in order to help prevent the mistake from happening again.

High Voltage

BC Hydro
Lower Mainland

Irene came to us because she kept having problems with high voltage coming into her house, which she said had caused her computer and other electronic equipment to malfunction. Irene wanted BC Hydro to fix the problem and compensate her for the damaged equipment. BC Hydro had paid Irene's claim for damaged electronic equipment before, but this time its staff had told her they would deny her claim.

Irene felt that BC Hydro staff had not provided her with an adequate explanation of the cause of the voltage problem or said how they planned to fix it. She was concerned that if BC Hydro did not resolve the problem, she would have to keep getting damaged equipment replaced.

When we began investigating Irene's complaint, BC Hydro staff told us that they were still investigating her claim. At that point, BC Hydro had not been able to pinpoint the source of the voltage problem. However, about a month after we began investigating, BC Hydro determined that the voltage regulator feeding Irene's circuit was failing, causing higher than normal voltage to be delivered to her house. The voltage regulator was fixed and BC Hydro staff were confident that these steps had addressed the problem.

BC Hydro sent a letter to Irene explaining the steps it had taken to detect and remedy her voltage complaint. Since it had found higher than normal voltage was being delivered to Irene's home, BC Hydro compensated her for her damaged equipment.

Divorce causes problem reconnecting hydro

BC Hydro

Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

Gail was in the middle of a divorce. She contacted us because BC Hydro had refused to reconnect service to the former family home, which was for sale.

Gail had launched divorce proceedings against her husband, Ian. The former family home, where Ian had lived on his own for a while after their separation, was now listed for sale. BC Hydro had disconnected service to the property because Ian owed $1,700 on past bills. However, Ian had now moved out, and Gail, who also lived elsewhere, had asked BC Hydro to reconnect the service under her name. BC Hydro would only do so if Gail paid the outstanding bill or provided proof that her husband was not living at the property. Gail did not think it was fair for BC Hydro to ask her to pay for power Ian had consumed after she separated from him. As Ian was now living in his car, she could not provide a tenancy agreement to show that he was not living at the former family home, as she had been asked to do. Gail did not think that the property could be sold without hydro service.

We contacted BC Hydro and explored with its staff how they could reconnect service under Gail's name. After our discussions, BC Hydro staff reviewed Gail's circumstances and decided that they could do so, if she met certain conditions. BC Hydro said Gail would need to provide documents confirming that she had launched divorce proceedings and that the property was for sale. She would also need to sign a statutory declaration that her husband no longer lived at the house and had no keys, and that she would notify BC Hydro immediately if he moved back.

The conditions provided BC Hydro with some certainty that Ian — the person who was in default on the bill — was no longer living at the premises, while freeing Gail from the need to assume debts that were not hers. Gail agreed that these conditions were reasonable, and we considered her complaint resolved.

Ministry acts quickly to reinstate funding for dialysis trips

Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Northern B.C.

Logan needed to go to the hospital three times a week for dialysis. The Ministry of Housing and Social Development had been paying for him to make these trips by taxi because of his physical limitations. He called us after the ministry told him it would no longer be paying these costs and that he should instead use the handyDART to get to the hospital.

Logan explained that while he did not need a wheelchair, he could not climb the stairs on the handyDART. Logan said his doctor had written to the ministry more than once with a description of his limitations, but this had not changed the ministry's decision. Logan thought the ministry had failed to really consider the impact of his physical condition when it decided to stop funding his transportation to dialysis by taxi.

When we received Logan's complaint, we contacted a senior manager at the ministry, who reviewed his file that same day. After doing so, the manager told us that it appeared that the person who had originally reviewed Logan's file had overlooked some important details. The manager said that the ministry would reinstate Logan's taxi funding. He had also talked with staff about the importance of conducting careful reviews.

We appreciated the ministry's quick response to this situation. The manager's immediate review and reinstatement of the funding for Logan to go by taxi to his dialysis treatments meant that Logan did not have to miss any appointments.

Man approved for temporary premium assistance after a year-long wait

Ministry of Finance
Lower Mainland

Jack came to our office because the Ministry of Finance had denied his application for temporary assistance with paying his Medical Services Plan premiums. He had appealed the ministry's decision but felt he was getting the runaround. By the time he called us, he owed about $2,000 in premiums for himself and his family but was unemployed and unable to pay anything toward this debt.

Jack had left his job in 2008 to take a short apprenticeship program. He fully expected to return to work after completing the program, but was laid off in the meantime due to the recession. Around the same time, his wife had also left her job and gone back to school. The combination of all these events resulted in Jack's family income being reduced by about two-thirds.

Unable to pay his MSP premiums, Jack applied for regular premium assistance. He was denied because his previous year's income was too high.

He then learned about the Temporary Premium Assistance program (TPA), which is available to people who do not qualify for regular premium assistance, but who have experienced recent unexpected financial hardship.

Jack applied for TPA in March 2009. In June, the ministry denied his application on the grounds that he was in an apprenticeship program, which it did not consider an unexpected event. Jack promptly requested a review of this decision and as part of that review, the ministry gave Jack a deadline to provide a letter from his employer confirming that he had been laid off. Jack told us that he asked his employer to fax the letter, but the ministry's fax machine was not working. When the ministry didn't receive the letter by the deadline, it cancelled Jack's application. Jack has been back and forth with ministry since then, trying to get his application reviewed and approved. Unable to resolve his concerns, Jack eventually contacted our office in January 2010.

During our investigation, we contacted the ministry's supervisor of the Temporary Premium Assistance Unit. She told us that a clerical error had resulted in Jack's letter not being forwarded or matched to his file. After discussing the situation with us, the supervisor approved Jack for TPA retroactively from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009, which meant he received a 100 per cent subsidy for that period. The supervisor also sent Jack a letter notifying him of this and included an application for regular premium assistance.

Doctor's visit approved

Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Interior

Jude complained that the Ministry of Housing and Social Development had denied him a medical transportation supplement that he needed to go see his doctor in a different town.

Jude, who was on income assistance, explained that he had scheduled an appointment to see his doctor and have a test done in the hospital the following week. Although his doctor lived in a different town, the ministry had covered his travel costs for this type of visit before, so Jude did not understand why it would not do so again this time.

We investigated whether the ministry had given Jude adequate reasons for its decision. As part of our process, we contacted a supervisor at the ministry who reviewed his file and explained that in the ministry's view, the treatment Jude was seeking was available in his home town. After speaking with us, however, the supervisor agreed to look into the matter further. She then talked to both Jude and Jude's doctor's office and concluded that it would be impossible for Jude to arrange to have the test done in a local hospital or see a local doctor before his already scheduled appointments.

On this basis, the ministry decided to approve Jude's request for a medical transportation supplement for the upcoming appointments. The ministry also agreed to write Jude a letter that explained its criteria and requirements for issuing this type of supplement. These actions resolved Jude's complaint, so we closed our file.

Single mother learns she can reapply for income assistance

Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Northern B.C.

Mary, who was a single parent, had been on income assistance for one year. She contacted our office after the Ministry of Housing and Social Development denied her further income assistance.

In addition to income assistance, Mary was also entitled to maintenance payments from her former spouse. However, it is one of the eligibility conditions for income assistance that applicants assign their right to maintenance to the ministry. The ministry also requires its clients to attend any maintenance-related court hearings or appointments and it provides written information that explains this.

When we investigated Mary's complaint, we learned that the ministry had discontinued her income assistance after she missed three court hearings related to her maintenance payments. Mary asked the ministry to formally reconsider its decision, and when she wasn't satisfied with that outcome, she appealed the decision to the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal, which upheld the decision. At that point, Mary was facing the end of the month without funds for food or shelter. She then contacted us.

When we spoke to Mary, she confirmed that she had received the court notices, but had overlooked attending. She explained that as a result of her appeal, she now understood that she needed to attend her court dates and had just been to one.

We told Mary that since her appeal had only dealt with her past eligibility, she may be able to reapply for income assistance. We contacted a manager who confirmed this was true. Mary then contacted the ministry and was given an application appointment the same day. She reapplied and was found eligible for assistance.

Ministry acts quickly to help applicant recovering from surgery

Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Lower Mainland

Peter contacted us because he could not get the documents the Ministry of Housing and Social Development needed to process his application for income assistance. He was having trouble getting them because he had just had surgery and needed bed rest. He thought the Ministry of Housing and Social Development could do more to help him get the necessary papers.

Peter explained that the ministry had asked him to provide medical, banking and other documents related to his income and assets before assessing his eligibility for income assistance. However, due to his recent surgery, Peter was unable to travel in person to the various businesses to get these papers. He said he had already authorized the release of his information to the ministry, but could not easily take other steps to get it. He said that if his application wasn't processed and approved in a timely way, he would end up homeless.

The question of how much help with obtaining documents ministry staff should offer to income assistance applicants and clients is one that our office had encountered before. It was one of a number of other systemic problems covered in a report on income assistance our office published in 2009. In that report (*Last Resort: Improving Fairness and Accountability in British Columbia's Income Assistance Program*), we recommended

that the ministry develop a policy outlining how and when it expects staff to help people obtain required documents and also train staff in this area. The ministry was in the process of implementing this recommendation when we received Peter's complaint.

After we consulted with the ministry about Peter's circumstances, staff there said they would contact the agencies on his behalf and attempt to obtain the required information. A supervisor later confirmed that the ministry had received all the required documents within one day and had notified Peter that he was eligible for income assistance.

We were pleased to see the ministry acting in a way that was consistent with what it had agreed to do in response to our systemic report.

Computer system fix makes it easier for homeless people to obtain stable housing

Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Lower Mainland

Hilary had been staying in shelters because she was homeless. She wanted to leave the streets and had found a place to rent and a roommate but couldn't get any further because she didn't have the money to pay a damage deposit. She called us because the Ministry of Housing and Social Development would not give her the money to pay a damage deposit and without this help she could not secure the housing she'd found.

Hilary had asked her potential landlord to fax an Intent to Rent form to the ministry. The ministry then gave her the rent money but refused to help her with the damage deposit on the grounds that a person or family on income assistance is eligible for a maximum of two damage deposits, and the ministry cannot issue a third one until one of the previous two has been recovered or repaid.

As part of our investigation of Hilary's complaint, we reviewed the relevant regulations and learned that ministry staff had the ability to provide more than two security deposits when a client meets one of three criteria. One of these criteria was that the person requesting the damage deposit is homeless or at immediate risk of becoming homeless.

However, when we contacted the ministry about this, staff told us they couldn't issue a damage deposit to Hilary because of how their computer system and codes worked. After we discussed the regulations and the grounds for exceptions with ministry staff, they reconsidered their decision and were able to apply a computer system workaround in order to appropriately provide Hilary with another damage deposit. This fixed Hilary's immediate problem.

The ministry also took some other steps in response to our investigation. A memo was sent to all ministry field staff clarifying that the regulations do not place an absolute limit on the number of damage deposits they can provide to a person or family, and that staff who decide that it is appropriate to issue another deposit should apply a computer system workaround in order to do this.

We were satisfied that these actions both resolved Hilary's complaint and addressed one of the administrative barriers that can stop homeless people from obtaining stable housing.

Regional district conducts referendum fairly

Cariboo Regional District

Three owners of vacation property in the Cariboo Regional District (CRD) jointly complained to us about how the CRD had conducted a referendum on whether to expand a fire protection service area to include the community where they had property.

The property owners lived in an community that had a smaller population than that of the fire protection area proposed for expansion. They believed it was unfair that residents of both areas were able to vote on the proposed expansion, since if residents of the larger area voted in favour, their smaller community would have to join the fire protection service area, regardless of their wishes.

The landowners had other concerns about the referendum too. They thought that the CRD had made it harder for non-residents to vote in the referendum by scheduling it right after the summer vacation season had ended. They also pointed out that advance voting was held during the week instead of a weekend day, when seasonal residents could have driven in to vote. They also didn't think the CRD had given non-resident owners enough notice of the referendum, as one of them had received the notice at home less than three weeks before the vote.

We agreed to investigate whether the CRD had been fair in its conduct of the referendum. As part of our investigation, we reviewed the relevant provisions of the *Local Government Act* (*LGA*) as well as other documents on the referendum and the information the CRD sent to residents. We noted that the under the *LGA*, the CRD had to obtain the consent of the electors in the entire service area affected by the bylaw that would expand the fire service protection area. It had no choice but to allow residents of both areas to vote in the referendum.

In terms of vote timing, the CRD said the date for the referendum was set after attempting to balance the interests of both seasonal and permanent residents. The CRD had made advance voting opportunities available during the week before the actual vote which, under the *LGA*, had to be held on a Saturday. It had scheduled advance voting opportunities before the end of August, making it more likely that seasonal residents would still be in the area on holiday. The bylaw required the approval of the provincial inspector of municipalities and the CRD had scheduled it for as soon after that was obtained as possible, in order to meet a deadline for local governments set by BC Assessment.

We also looked at how the CRD notified property owners of the referendum. According to the *LGA*, the CRD was only required to publish the notice in a newspaper that was distributed once a week in the area affected by the referendum for two weeks in a row, and to do this at least six, but not more than 30, days before voting day. However, the CRD had gone beyond this minimum requirement by attempting to notify individual property owners by mail. Although variations in mail delivery and distance meant that not all property owners received these notices at the same time, the CRD's efforts still exceeded what it was legally required to do.

Given the various factors and deadlines the CRD weighed in its conduct of the referendum and its efforts to contact affected property owners individually, we were unable to conclude that it had acted unfairly. We informed the property owners of this and then closed our file.

Case Summaries – Local government

Second tax notice prompts complaint from homeowner

City of Richmond

Harry was upset when, two weeks after paying his property taxes in full, he received a notice saying he owed an additional $275.

No one at the city would tell Harry what the new amount was for, but they all insisted that it needed to be paid, including the penalty for late payment. Eventually someone at the city told him that another person's homeowner grant had been applied to his property tax by mistake and that the city was now reclaiming that amount. Harry was angry that he was being penalized for the city's error, and dissatisfied with the service he had received. He also wanted the city to waive the $275. He contacted us for help.

During our investigation we learned that Harry had first contacted the city about his problem in February 2009. The city had then investigated the matter and wrote to Harry with the results. In her letter to him, the city's manager of finance had provided a chronology of Harry's property tax account and explained that staff had discovered and corrected a clerical error found during an audit. She confirmed that the city would reverse any late payment penalty or interest upon payment of the $275 and apologized for any frustration Harry had experienced in dealing with the tax department. The manager further explained that legislation prevented the city from waiving property taxes. However, the letter did not explain how the error had occurred.

When we spoke with the director in the city clerk's office about Harry's continuing concerns, he offered to look further into the procedural error that resulted in the homeowner grant being incorrectly applied to Harry's tax notice, and to write to him with a full explanation.

The director's letter to Harry provided a full explanation of how city staff process applications for homeowner grants and the mistake they had made. The director acknowledged the city's error, apologized for any inconvenience and invited Harry to call if he had further questions. The director also took steps to ensure that staff were aware of how to prevent similar errors in the future.

We then considered the matter resolved and closed our file.

District acts fairly toward landowner

District of Maple Ridge

Ike was an elderly man who had lived on a hobby farm for almost 30 years. He came to us because the District of Maple Ridge wanted to buy part of his property to extend a road. Ike said he had told the district he was not interested in selling and that district staff had agreed to leave him alone. But Ike said district staff continued to attempt to purchase his property and he wanted them to stop.

In the course of our investigation we found that district staff and Ike had been discussing his property for more than 16 months. Staff agreed that Ike had made it clear early on that he was not interested in selling only a portion of his land, and explained that their discussions centred on negotiating the purchase of the whole parcel. Ike had consented to an appraisal and continued to consider the district's offer over the following months. Discussions went on until the district decided that, due to time constraints, it needed to begin expropriation proceedings.

After thoroughly reviewing the available information and documents, we were unable to confirm Ike's view that the district staff been unreasonable in their attempts to negotiate with him or had promised him that he would be left alone, so we informed him of this and closed our file.

Complaint leads to progress on parking problem

Village of Warfield

George contacted us to complain about how the Village of Warfield had responded to a parking problem his mother was having.

George explained that his mother was a senior who, although she did not drive herself, needed her driveway to remain clear in case of emergencies. George said that his mother had an ongoing problem with people parking in front of her driveway, which the village had not addressed. He had frequently contacted the village office, but no one would explain why the bylaw that banned parking in front of driveways was not being enforced. Since his own attempts to resolve the problem had not worked, he decided to contact us.

During our investigation we learned that the village had appointed a new chief administrative officer in May 2009. When we informed the new CAO of the difficulties that George's mother was having, he offered to look into the matter himself and contact George. The CAO then spoke with George to ensure that he understood his concerns and made the village's bylaw enforcement officer aware of the problem. The CAO also committed to monitoring the area regularly for bylaw compliance, including by conducting after-hours patrols. The CAO asked George to contact him if the problem persisted, so that he could follow up.

We considered these actions to resolve George's complaint and we closed our file.

Couple satisfied by answers to bylaw enforcement questions

Islands Trust

Tom and his wife lived on one of the Gulf Islands. They believed that a structure that had been built on a neighbouring property was in violation of a bylaw and had asked the Island's Trust to take action. They contacted us because they were unsatisfied with the response they received when they asked the Islands Trust for information on the steps the bylaw officer had taken in response to their complaint.

After reviewing the information relevant to this complaint, we discussed the matter with the Islands Trust's chief administrative officer (CAO). We asked whether she would be willing to provide the couple with a written explanation of the enforcement steps the bylaw officer had taken. She agreed to do so and also to send the draft letter to us for our review.

After reviewing the letter and chronology prepared by the Islands Trust and speaking with the couple, we were satisfied that their concerns had been addressed. Tom and his wife were pleased with the resolution of their complaint and thanked us for our help.

Residential care rate reduced after review

Fraser Health Authority

Ina called us because she didn't know what else to do. Her father was in a care home, where the provincial government subsidized his rate due to his income. After Ina took over as his power of attorney, she learned that if she didn't provide the Fraser Health Authority (FHA) with her father's income tax information, he would have to pay the full rate — and he couldn't afford that. To make matters worse, she also learned that her father's taxes had not been done in three years and that she had missed the health authority's deadline to reapply for his subsidy. Ina ended up having to pay the full rate (on her father's behalf) for the months that his tax information was not available. She did not think this was fair, as she had told the health authority repeatedly that her father had no money to pay for his care.

In investigating Ina's complaint we learned that according to the FHA's policy, clients who can't afford a rate increase are supposed to be referred to a case manager so that their circumstances can be reviewed. When we spoke with the FHA's manager of residential services about Ina's situation, we explained that it appeared that this hadn't happened in her father's case. The manager looked into the matter and, after confirming that Ina's father was eligible for a reduced rate, issued a cheque for the overpayment. The manager also took steps to ensure that all staff members were aware of and understood the rate increase policy.

Family caregiver benefits from small increase in home support hours

Interior Health Authority

Hank had a problem with how the Interior Health Authority (IHA) had scheduled his wife Ida's home support services.

Ida was 73 years old and unable to talk, due to a stroke. Communicating with Ida was very difficult — Hank had to ask her questions and then do his best to interpret her answers. At the time he called us in 2009, Hank had been Ida's primary caregiver for more than six years.

Hank and Ida had applied to the IHA for home support services five years ago. At the time, the IHA had said that Ida qualified for eight hours of home support per week, which would be scheduled according to the couple's wishes. They chose to have all eight hours on one day of the week so that Hank could get a much needed day off from his caregiving tasks.

Two years later, citing staff shortages, the IHA reduced Ida's home support hours to four per week. The IHA also rescheduled the hours so that they were delivered in two two-hour blocks at different times on the same day and with a gap separating the two blocks.

When the couple later asked the IHA to reinstate Ida's additional four weekly home support hours, the IHA instead offered to provide her with outside-of-the-home day care services three times per week. Hank said that this idea wouldn't work for Ida since pain prevented her from going to day care more than twice a week.

We agreed to investigate Hank's complaint and contacted the IHA Patient Care Quality Office. Staff there then contacted Hank to discuss the issues.

After some discussion, Hank and the IHA agreed that Ida would receive an additional hour of home support services, for a total of five hours per week. The IHA also scheduled its provision of home support to coordinate with help that two of Hank and Ida's neighbours offered to provide so that Hank's need for a weekly eight-hour break from caregiving could be met.

Keep it down! Loud television bothers senior in a shared room

Fraser Health Authority

Horace's 86-year-old wife had Parkinson's disease and lived in a shared room in an extended care facility. Her roommate often kept her television on late into the night, sometimes until three or four a.m.

Horace and his wife had been trying to resolve their concerns about the television noise for over a year before he contacted us about it. He told us that when they had talked to the head nurse, she said that the facility's policy was that residents were allowed to use televisions, radios or phones "at any hour of the night." This didn't seem fair to Horace or his wife.

We contacted the Fraser Health Authority, which was the owner and operator of the facility. FHA staff told us that their noise policy was actually different than what Horace had been told or understood and that people in shared rooms were not supposed to have their televisions on during the night unless they used earphones. They said this type of complaint was quite common and should be easy to deal with.

FHA staff said they would take prompt action to remedy the problem. We suggested that they first consider discussing the matter with Horace and coming up with a solution that both he and the FHA could agree on. They agreed to this.

Within two weeks of when Horace contacted us, the FHA had moved Horace's wife to a private room.

Grandmother gets help with caring for grandson

Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Northern B.C.

Grace was looking after her grandson. She complained because she had been waiting two months for the Ministry of Housing and Social Development to tell her whether she would get the supplement that she had applied for under the Child in the Home of a Relative Program.

We agreed to investigate Grace's complaint about the delay, and contacted the ministry to learn more. A ministry supervisor then reviewed the details of Grace's file, and informed us that due to an oversight, they had missed one of the steps in assessing Grace's eligibility. When this came to their attention, they expedited her application and made a decision within several days. The ministry found that Grace was eligible for the supplement, and assistance was backdated to cover the period of delay.

PGT visits elderly man at home to answer his questions

Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee
Lower Mainland

Sam, an elderly man, contacted us because he had concerns about how the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) was managing his finances.

Sam had questions about certain transactions on his account and thought the PGT was making errors. He wanted to be able to ask his questions and get answers face-to-face from someone from the PGT. He had understood that someone from the PGT would meet with him in person in his home to review his concerns, but at the time he called us, he told us he had not heard from PGT staff for several months.

We contacted a senior official at the PGT who said she would follow up with her staff to determine what could be done to respond to Sam's concerns. Shortly after, a regional manager contacted us and said she would have her staff contact him. She later told us that her staff had met with Sam in his home and responded to all his questions. The manager had also agreed to put the information that was discussed in a letter to Sam that he could keep for his future reference.

Intervention helps worried woman

WorkSafeBC
Interior

We heard from Judy a week before she was scheduled to undergo hand surgery to fix a work-related injury. As a result of the surgery, she would temporarily lose the use of one of her hands. This was a particular problem for Judy since she had a digestive disorder that required her to take special measures to feed herself — and she needed both hands to carry out these procedures. Judy was very upset when she called us because, though her surgery was imminent, WorkSafeBC had not yet responded to her request to provide her with post-operative care.

Judy had been off work since July on her doctor's orders. She had promptly asked WorkSafeBC to reopen a previously accepted claim for her injured hand, but heard nothing back for the next few months. In October, Judy saw a specialist who told her to have surgery right away. As her December surgery date approached, Judy became increasingly concerned that WorkSafeBC had still not told her whether it would reopen her claim. She was extremely worried about what would happen if WorkSafeBC did not agree to pay for her post-operative care. Judy told us that if she did not receive skilled assistance after her hand surgery, she would not be able to feed herself.

We informed WorkSafeBC that we were investigating Judy's complaint and asked our contact there to treat the file as urgent. Once we did this, WorkSafeBC staff took rapid steps to address the situation. A manager called Judy within two days to assure her that WorkSafeBC would pay for her surgery and arrange for her to have home care after the operation. One of WorkSafeBC's nurses called Judy that same day to learn about her post-surgery care needs.

When we spoke to Judy after her surgery, she confirmed that WorkSafeBC had reopened her claim, paid for her operation, and arranged for nursing care. WorkSafeBC had also paid Judy benefits retroactively back to when she first requested that her claim be reopened. Judy said that her surgery had been more extensive than she had expected, which meant that the nursing care was even more necessary to her staying healthy and properly fed. Judy very much appreciated our quick response to her pressing situation.

Oyster farmer gets licence and explanation after long delay

Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

Gary came to us because he had been waiting three years for the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to make a decision on his application to expand the aquaculture licence for his oyster farm. He was frustrated by how long it was taking ministry to process his application and called us for help.

We agreed to investigate Gary's complaint and spoke to both an assistant director and an area manager at the ministry's aquaculture branch. The assistant director told us that the amount of time it had taken to process Gary's application was not unusual given its complexity, competing priorities at the branch and the ministry's obligations to consult with First Nations. We learned that the consultations with First Nations had taken two years to complete, and that during this time the ministry had been able to resolve a conflict in the

foreshore area covered by Gary's application. However, the assistant director did acknowledge that there had been a delay after these consultations were finished, and that this was due in part to the misfiling of Gary's application and a backlog of other aquaculture applications.

After these discussions with us, ministry staff finished their consideration of Gary's application and were able to grant him the licence he sought. At our urging, the ministry also wrote to Gary to formally apologize for the delay and give him a detailed explanation of what had caused it.

Business reclassified after new audit

WorkSafeBC
Interior

Judd owned a courier company. He thought WorkSafeBC had misclassified the type of business he was in, which meant that he was paying much higher rates for coverage than he thought was fair. He said the difference in the rates amounted to tens of thousands of dollars.

Judd told us that after recently auditing him, WorkSafeBC had classified his company as a general trucking business. He believed that was the wrong classification for his courier service and said he had repeatedly asked WorkSafeBC to explain why it had put him in this category and to reconsider his classification. He had been unable to get an answer that satisfied him. While WorkSafeBC had informed him of the 90-day deadline for appealing this decision, Judd had only discovered the classification problem after that deadline had passed. He had asked WorkSafeBC to extend the time allowed for him to appeal, but his request was denied.

We contacted a manager at WorkSafeBC who explained that there were set policies and criteria for deciding business classifications. He did agree to review Judd's file, however. The manager later told us that WorkSafeBC had decided to move to an annual classification cycle to address business changes and businesses that may have been misclassified. As a result of that new process, Judd's business had been audited again and reclassified as a courier service.

Judd was very happy with this outcome and thanked us for our help.

Refund redirected

WorkSafeBC
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

Bob came to our office with a complaint about WorkSafeBC.

Bob had sold his company in 2008. After doing so, he realized he had a credit on the company's WorkSafeBC account. On the advice of WorkSafeBC, Bob sent a letter from his accountant requesting reimbursement. He included a signed release from the company's new owner.

However, instead of sending the reimbursement cheque to Bob, WorkSafeBC sent it to the new owner. Bob was unable to collect the money from the new owner and WorkSafeBC was unwilling to issue a new cheque. Bob did not think it was fair that he should have to keep trying to collect the money from the new owner when WorkSafeBC had sent the cheque to the wrong person. He came to us for help.

We contacted WorkSafeBC to discuss its process for issuing refunds in this situation. WorkSafeBC staff told us they usually send refunds to the current address of the company. However, in this case, the company had changed hands and WorkSafeBC was supposed to send the cheque to Bob, the former owner. In order to do this, WorkSafeBC staff had to override the system to redirect the cheque. This hadn't happened, so the cheque was sent to the new owner's address.

When we reviewed the file, we could see that WorkSafeBC had agreed to issue the refund to Bob. Staff at WorkSafeBC acknowledged they had sent the cheque to the company's new owner by mistake. As a result, WorkSafeBC sent Bob a letter of apology along with a cheque for the full amount owing. This resolved Bob's complaint, so we closed our file.

Law Society reconsiders its jurisdiction to investigate

The Law Society of British Columbia
Northern B.C.

Ted contacted us because he was unhappy with the way The Law Society of British Columbia responded to a complaint he made about a lawyer. The society is the body that regulates lawyers in British Columbia.

Ted was the president of a company for which he was also a director and shareholder. The company had hired a lawyer to represent it during the sale of one of its assets and Ted was dissatisfied with how the lawyer had represented the company. He had tried to address this directly with the lawyer, but the lawyer refused to deal with Ted. Believing this was improper, Ted complained to the society.

The society told Ted that it wouldn't deal with his complaint because it did not have the jurisdiction to investigate how a lawyer responded to a shareholder. Ted then complained to us.

After reviewing Ted's information, we asked the society if it was outside its jurisdiction to investigate how a lawyer responded to someone who was the president and a director of a company. The society reviewed Ted's complaint and informed us that how a lawyer responded to a director of a company was, in fact, within its jurisdiction. Staff at the society told us that they would assign Ted's complaint for investigation and would ensure that it was handled by a different investigator than the one who had originally considered Ted's complaint.

Ted told us that he appreciated our help with ensuring that his complaint would be investigated.

VIHA commits to providing better information about hiring foreign home support workers

Vancouver Island Health Authority

Jane contacted us because she thought the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) was refusing to provide her with the information she needed to meet Citizenship and Immigration Canada's requirements for employment in Canada.

Jane had moved to Vancouver Island from another country in order to provide care to her aunt, who was a client of the Choices in Support for Independent Living (CSIL) program. Under this program, health authorities provide eligible home support clients with direct funding so they can purchase and manage their own home support services. CSIL clients are responsible for recruiting, hiring, training, scheduling, supervising and paying their own home support workers.

Jane had been in touch with VIHA staff before moving to Canada and believed that VIHA had approved her as a caregiver for her aunt. She thought this meant she had done everything necessary for her to come to Canada and be paid to care for her aunt. However, after arriving Jane learned that she needed to meet certain federal government requirements in order to be a paid employee in Canada.

One of these federal requirements was obtaining a Labour Market Opinion Number. A Labour Market Opinion is prepared by Human Resources and Development Canada for Citizenship and Immigration Canada and addresses the likely impact that hiring a foreign worker will have on the Canadian labour market. When Jane contacted our office, she believed that VIHA had a Labour Market Opinion Number regarding the need for caregivers in the Vancouver Island area. She said VIHA had refused to provide this when she asked for it.

We agreed to investigate whether VIHA had been unfair when it decided not to provide Jane with a Labour Market Opinion Number. One of our first steps was to review how the CSIL program works. We confirmed that under this program, the client is the employer of any care provider and that this point is clearly stated in the public information about the program. We also confirmed that since the CSIL client is the employer, the federal government required that person to obtain a Labour Market Opinion Number, not VIHA.

While VIHA was not obligated to provide the opinion number, we discussed with its staff the fact that providing additional information to CISL clients about the steps required to hire foreign caregivers could help prevent misunderstandings in the future.

VIHA responded positively to this idea and committed to making improvements, including by putting a reference and a link to Citizenship and Immigration Canada in its guide for CSIL clients. VIHA also agreed to advise its case managers that if they are aware of any clients who are intending to hire foreign caregivers, they should refer these clients to Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

VIHA showed leadership in making changes to improve the services it provides to its CSIL clients. Jane was pleased that these changes would reduce the likelihood of future misunderstandings in similar situations.

WorkSafeBC pays for orthotics — after seven years of asking

WorkSafeBC

Lower Mainland

Gabe contacted us in 2007 because WorkSafeBC had repeatedly denied his request to be reimbursed for orthotic shoe inserts, and he believed this was unfair.

In 2002, Gabe's doctors had recommended he get orthotics to help with problems he had developed in his 70s, due to an earlier knee injury. He had received workers' compensation benefits for the knee injury. Gabe had been unsuccessfully trying to convince WorkSafeBC to pay for these orthotics since 2002. His efforts were made even more challenging by the fact that English was not his first language, and he often needed to have WorkSafeBC correspondence translated into Spanish. However, WorkSafeBC's medical advisors believed that Gabe's need for orthotics resulted from his flat feet, not his knee injury. As evidence, these medical advisors noted that his injury was limited to one knee, and they reasoned that he needed two orthotics because he had two flat feet.

Eventually, a different medical advisor at WorkSafeBC had looked at Gabe's case, and agreed, as Gabe's doctors had observed, that orthotics are always prescribed in pairs. Since both his own doctors and WorkSafeBC's most recent medical advisor agreed that his need for orthotics was likely due to his workplace injury, Gabe had believed that WorkSafeBC would now reimburse him for his orthotics. He went ahead and paid the $720 for a pair of orthotics in January 2004.

However, when Gabe asked to be reimbursed for this cost, WorkSafeBC maintained that it could no longer consider his request because he had not continued his appeals of his previous requests for orthotics. WorkSafeBC claimed that provisions of the *Workers' Compensation Act* prevented them from reimbursing Gabe, even though all the medical people now agreed that his need for orthotics resulted from his workplace injury. That's when Gabe contacted us.

We began an investigation and were surprised when WorkSafeBC told us that it did not consider its own medical advisor's most recent opinion to be new information, which would enable it to review Gabe's request. WorkSafeBC maintained that Gabe had not asked for a review of one of its decisions on time and had exhausted his review and appeal rights, including the right to request a time extension for a review of this matter. Under the circumstances, WorkSafeBC maintained that it had no other available mechanism that allowed it to pay for his orthotics.

It appeared to us that WorkSafeBC was rejecting Gabe's request for reimbursement on purely procedural grounds. We did not agree with WorkSafeBC's view that its most recent medical advisor's opinion was only a different interpretation of existing evidence, not new medical evidence. We discussed with WorkSafeBC the fact that Gabe was an elderly man who had been doing his best to navigate his way through the workers' compensation appeal system in a language that was foreign to him.

Case Summaries – Work and Business

We also observed that the existing decisions on Gabe's case from WorkSafeBC's Review Division and the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal (WCAT) were based on a disagreement between Gabe's doctors and WorkSafeBC's medical advisors. As that was no longer the case and all of the medical evidence now supported Gabe, we continued to discuss with WorkSafeBC how it could correct what appeared to us to be an injustice.

In February 2009, 18 months after we began our investigation, WorkSafeBC returned this matter to its Review Division. Its chief review officer considered Gabe's request again, in light of the medical evidence. He decided that the Review Division could review Gabe's request. The Review Decision subsequently decided in Gabe's favour and WorkSafeBC then sent Gabe a cheque for the orthotics he had purchased in 2002 and also paid for a recent repair. We also asked, and WorkSafeBC agreed, that if needed, WorkSafeBC would pay for a new pair of orthotics to replace Gabe's existing ones, since they were now seven years old.

These actions finally resolved Gabe's long-standing complaint.

Tribunal makes information more accessible to people with visual impairments

BC Human Rights Tribunal
Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast

Iris, a person with a visual impairment, was considering making a complaint to the BC Human Rights Tribunal but had run into a problem. The tribunal did not have any information on its role or her rights under the British Columbia Human Rights Code available in an audio format. Iris explained that it would be difficult for her to understand how to proceed with her complaint without being able to review information on the tribunal's role and processes in this way.

We consulted with the tribunal about Iris's complaint and the possible ways that it could address her concerns while staying within its own mandate and budget. We also learned that human rights tribunals in some other Canadian jurisdictions do provide at least some of their materials in audio format and discussed this with the tribunal. After consulting with us, the tribunal agreed to instruct its staff to read any of its guides or information sheets to callers who request this. The tribunal also agreed that it would record audio versions of its information sheets and guides on CD and make these available when requested. Once the tribunal completed the recordings, it added a note to its website confirming that the information sheets and guides were available in audio format upon request.

These actions satisfied Iris's concern about the accessibility of the tribunal's information. She was very happy with how her complaint had been dealt with and said she planned to let others know about the new resource that the tribunal would be creating. We were pleased that Iris's complaint had resulted in improved accessibility that could benefit many other people with visual impairments or low literacy skills.

Going beyond the letter of the law

Interior Health Authority

Walter contacted us because he didn't think the Interior Health Authority (IHA) had allowed enough opportunity for public input on its pest management plan. He thought the IHA should fix this by extending the time allowed for public comment.

We agreed to investigate whether the IHA had followed an appropriate process for its consultation. In order to do this, we considered whether the IHA had adequately advertised the consultation and whether the information it published was clear about the purpose of the consultation and how to participate. We also reviewed the rules for public consultation on this type of plan, which are contained in the *Integrated Pest Management Act* and the regulations made under it.

In the process of reviewing these rules, we learned that the Ministry of Environment is responsible for deciding whether the legal requirements have been met before it approves pest management plans, and that in this case it had not yet begun this process. Since the ministry had not yet exercised its legislated role, we concluded that it was too early for our office to comment on whether the IHA's consultation process had been appropriate.

However, given the concerns that Walter had raised, we did discuss with the IHA whether it might be useful and fair for it to make further efforts — beyond what was legally required — to ensure that the public had ample opportunities to learn about and contribute to its consultation processes.

As a result, the IHA committed to improving its processes in the future. The IHA agreed to post more detailed information on its website so that anyone reading it would be aware that a public consultation process was underway and understand how to participate. The IHA also agreed to post on its website a clearly and plainly worded invitation to the public to submit comments on future draft pest management plans. The IHA informed its communications division and the contractor involved in its current consultation process of these changes so that they would be aware of and could act on the issues raised by Walter's complaint.

The IHA demonstrated leadership by committing to go beyond legal requirements in order to make its future public consultation processes more accessible and meaningful. Although Walter was disappointed that the IHA did not re-open its current consultation process, we were satisfied by its commitments and the fact that the Ministry of Environment would be considering whether the IHA had met the legislated requirements. We let Walter know that if, after the ministry had completed its process, he felt it was inadequate, he could bring a complaint about that back to us.

Customer service complaints resolved

Ministry of Environment
Lower Mainland

Georgios received a letter from the Ministry of Environment's Fish and Wildlife Branch telling him that he needed to surrender his BC Hunter Number Card. Anyone 18 years of age or older needs to have one of these cards in order to obtain a resident hunting licence. Georgios was willing to surrender his card, but wanted to be sure that the ministry received it, so he didn't want to put it in the mail. He called the ministry to find out if there was a place in the Vancouver area where he could hand-deliver it.

Georgios contacted us because he was concerned about the customer service provided by the ministry employee who spoke with him. He maintained that she was rude and disrespectful in her conversation with him, and had not given him the information he required. When he came to us, he still did not know where he could deliver his card in the Vancouver area. He wanted to get that information, as well as an apology.

We decided to investigate Georgios' complaints and brought them to the attention of a senior manager at the Fish and Wildlife Branch. After looking into this matter, the manager agreed that the ministry would provide an oral and written apology to Georgios. While it was more common for people to mail in their cards, the ministry arranged for Georgios to bring his card to a ministry office in Surrey. Georgios was satisfied with the ministry's response and said he appreciated our efforts to resolve his complaint.

Case Summaries – Other

Inmate's lost property complaint resolved

North Fraser Pretrial Centre, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Herb contacted us because he believed the North Fraser Pretrial Centre was taking too long to fairly compensate him for property of his that the pretrial centre had mistakenly discarded.

By the time Herb came to us, staff at the pretrial centre had accepted that they had made a mistake when they discarded his belongings before he returned to claim them. They had agreed to offer Herb compensation for the replacement value of his lost items, which included clothing and his identification. Herb came to us approximately six months after his incarceration, by which point he was frustrated by the length of time it was taking the pretrial centre to send him what he believed he was owed.

During our investigation we learned that the pretrial centre had already made two offers to Herb, both of which he had rejected. Staff at the pretrial centre told us that they did not intend to increase their final offer, which was for approximately $100.

We reviewed the items that the pretrial centre was prepared to compensate Herb for and learned that these included only the specific items noted in the property inventory list that Herb and the pretrial centre had signed when he was admitted. The offers did not include compensation for the "miscellaneous cards" included in this list. Although the staff at the pretrial centre were unclear as to which cards were being referred to, there was a record that Herb had various cards at earlier stages of his incarceration.

Under these circumstances, we asked the staff at the pretrial centre if they were willing to make further enquiries to assess the replacement costs for some of the miscellaneous cards that it had held in its custody. Staff agreed to do this and, after their review, offered Herb approximately $200 as compensation, which he accepted.

Farmers' market dispute prompts complaint

Vancouver Island Health Authority

When Greta contacted our office she was very upset. She explained that tempers had flared at a local farmers' market when an environmental health officer arrived to enforce a food preparation rule. Greta said that she was taking pictures of the situation and the officer, and had continued to do so after the officer asked her not to. Greta said the officer touched her camera and her shoulder to get her to stop, and also touched a vendor. Greta thought it was inappropriate for the officer to do this. However, when Greta complained to the health authority that employed the officer about this behaviour, the health authority wrote back supporting the officer's actions. Greta felt that the health authority had missed the point by not acknowledging how she had been affected by the incident. As no one had apologized to her, she asked us for help.

We agreed to investigate whether the health authority had properly responded to Greta's complaint. When we did so, we found that the health authority had investigated the incident, gathered and considered relevant information, advised Greta of the outcome in a timely manner, and come to conclusions that followed logically from the information considered. The letter the health authority wrote to Greta explained the role of the officer and the need to comply with regulations. However, after we spoke with a senior official

at the health authority regarding Greta's concern about the original response, she reviewed the file and agreed to write to Greta. The letter she sent Greta acknowledged the impact of the situation on Greta and expressed her regret. We confirmed with Greta that she had received this letter. She said it satisfied her and thanked us for our efforts.

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Statistical

Statistical Overview of Work and Performance

The following pages set out in a statistical and comparative detail our office's work and performance between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010.[6] This page provides a brief summary of the detailed data that follows.[7]

The fiscal year 2009/10 saw a continued increase in our workload. The number of complaints and requests for information or assistance we received increased by approximately five per cent over the previous year, from 7,943 to 8,344. This is up approximately 30 per cent since 2006, when the number of complaints and requests for information or assistance totalled 6,438.

Reflecting changes in communication choices in British Columbia, for the first time the number of web-based complaint forms we received (701) exceeded the number of letters (696). The majority of contact with our office remains by phone (6,680).

The services of the office continue to be more actively used by British Columbians outside of the Lower Mainland (41 per cent of the population and 55 per cent of files opened) than those in the Lower Mainland (59 per cent of the population and 42 per cent of files opened). The remaining three per cent of files related to people who did not provide a specific address or who were from outside the province.

Fifty-three per cent of the files we opened in 2009/10 involved complaints about provincial government ministries; 27 per cent involved complaints about provincial commissions, boards and corporations; eight per cent involved complaints about local government authorities; and seven per cent involved complaints about health authorities. The majority of remaining five per cent of files we opened in 2009/2010 involved complaints about self-regulating professions and educational institutions. The Ministry of Housing and Social Development, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, WorkSafeBC, the Ministry of Public Safety and the Solicitor General and ICBC were our five most significant authorities in 2009/10.

This year was the first full year of operation for our early resolution process (ERP). The ERP has been a highly successful initiative that has routed approximately 14 per cent of our complaint files (307 in 2009/10) into a process where they can be addressed and resolved within ten days of receipt.

Despite the success of this initiative, the increasing workload in the office necessitated additional action and so in September 2009, we created a Files Awaiting Assignment List. Open files on this list are reviewed regularly by one of our managers of investigation and assigned as quickly as possible to an ombudsperson officer for action. By the end of its first six months of operation there were 176 open files on the list, awaiting assignment. A total of 2,226 individual investigative files were assigned to ombudsperson officers in 2009/10 and they closed 2,336 files.

Between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010 approximately 55 per cent of the files we investigated were resolved under section 14 of the *Ombudsperson Act* and approximately 45 per cent were not substantiated.

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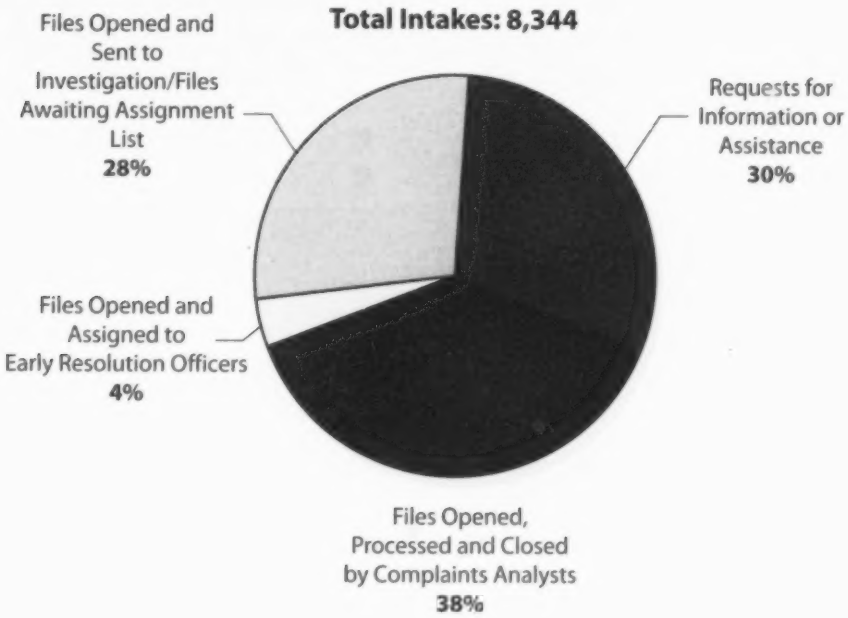
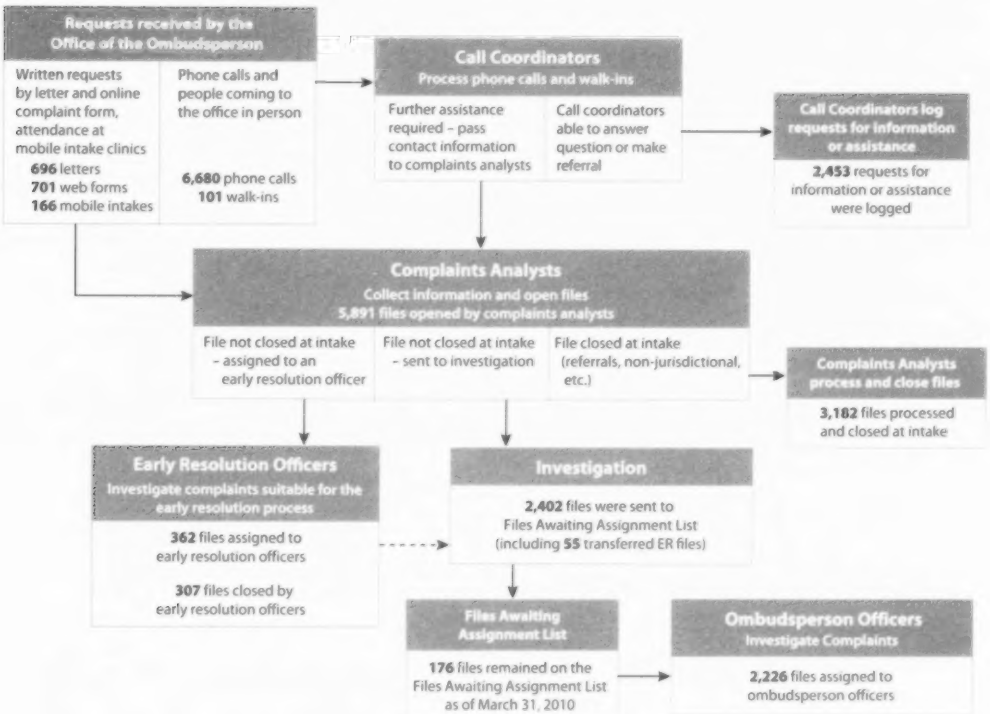
[6] This information should be read in conjunction with our act, strategic plan, budget, and the rest of this annual report. Together those documents set out our office's mandate, plan, resources and results. All of them are available on our website at www.bcombudsperson.ca.

[7] The data contained in the following tables and charts may occasionally vary slightly from previous reports. In such cases, the figures given in the most current report are the most accurate.

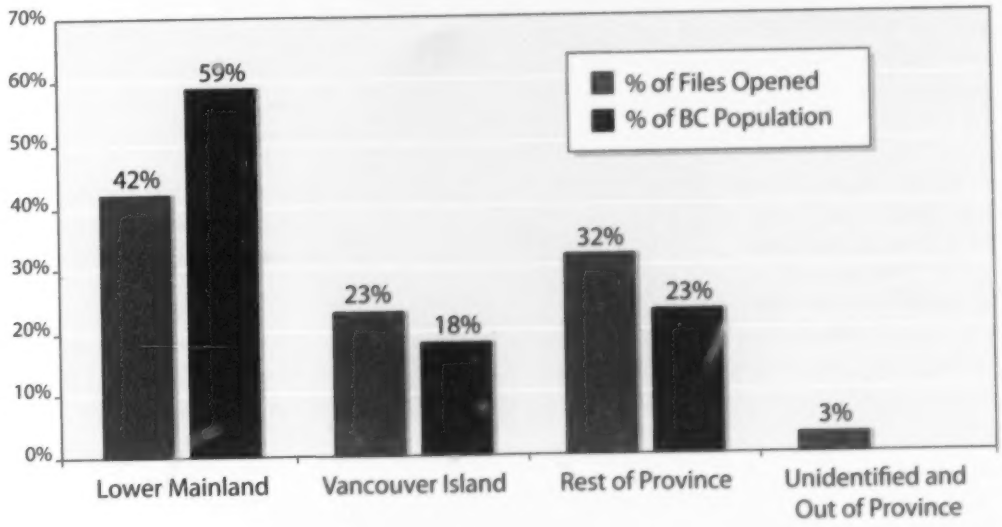
Statist

How We Handled Intakes in 2009/10


Total Intakes: 8,344
Files Opened and Sent to Investigation/Files Awaiting Assignment List
28%
Requests for Information or Assistance
30%
Files Opened and Assigned to Early Resolution Officers
4%
Files Opened, Processed and Closed by Complaints Analysts
38%


Requests received by the Office of the Ombudsperson
Written requests by letter and online complaint form, attendance at mobile intake clinics
696 letters
701 web forms
166 mobile intakes
Phone calls and people coming to the office in person
6,680 phone calls
101 walk-ins
Call Coordinators
Process phone calls and walk-ins
Further assistance required – pass contact information to complaints analysts
Call coordinators able to answer question or make referral
Call Coordinators log requests for information or assistance
2,453 requests for information or assistance were logged
Complaints Analysts
Collect information and open files
5,891 files opened by complaints analysts
File not closed at intake – assigned to an early resolution officer
File not closed at intake – sent to investigation
File closed at intake (referrals, non-jurisdictional, etc.)
Complaints Analysts process and close files
3,182 files processed and closed at intake
Early Resolution Officers
Investigate complaints suitable for the early resolution process
362 files assigned to early resolution officers
307 files closed by early resolution officers
Investigation
2,402 files were sent to Files Awaiting Assignment List (including 55 transferred ER files)
Files Awaiting Assignment List
176 files remained on the Files Awaiting Assignment List as of March 31, 2010
Ombudsperson Officers
Investigate Complaints
2,226 files assigned to ombudsperson officers

Geographical Distribution of Files vs. Population (for Jurisdictional Files Opened in 2009/10)



Breakdown of Files by Region

	Files Opened	Jurisdictional Files Opened
Lower Mainland	2,471	2,260
Vancouver Island	1,345	1,225
Rest of Province	1,856	1,722
Unidentified	32	21
Out of Province	187	158
Totals	**5,891**	**5,386**

Statistics

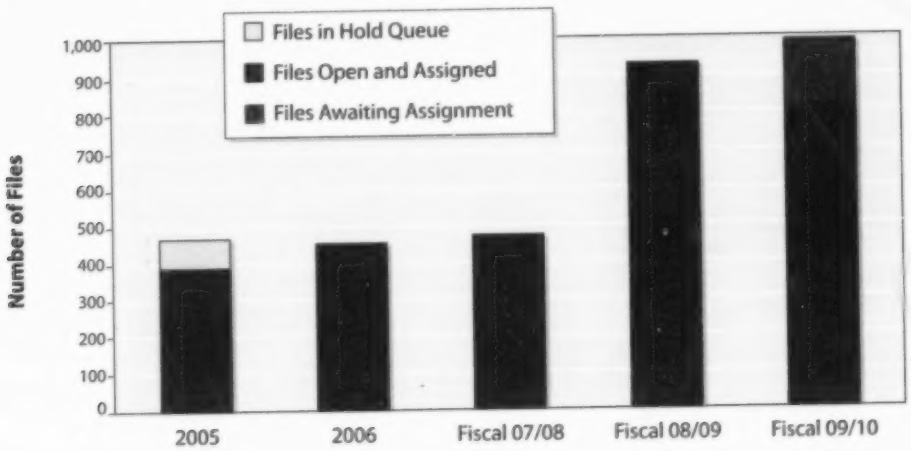
Files Opened by Electoral District, 2009/10*

#	Electoral District	Files Opened
1	Abbotsford-Mission	45
2	Abbotsford South	58
3	Abbotsford West	40
4	Alberni-Pacific Rim	114
5	Boundary-Similkameen	81
6	Burnaby-Deer Lake	40
7	Burnaby-Edmonds	73
8	Burnaby-Lougheed	16
9	Burnaby North	35
10	Cariboo-Chilcotin	36
11	Cariboo North	65
12	Chilliwack	69
13	Chilliwack-Hope	83
14	Columbia River-Revelstoke	53
15	Comox Valley	82
16	Coquitlam-Burke Mountain	44
17	Coquitlam-Maillardville	79
18	Cowichan Valley	78
19	Delta North	26
20	Delta South	21
21	Esquimalt-Royal Roads	69
22	Fort Langley-Aldergrove	43
23	Fraser-Nicola	49
24	Juan de Fuca	71
25	Kamloops-North Thompson	67
26	Kamloops-South Thompson	84
27	Kelowna-Lake Country	73
28	Kelowna-Mission	53
29	Kootenay East	69
30	Kootenay West	85
31	Langley	33
32	Maple Ridge-Mission	67
33	Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	78
34	Nanaimo	102
35	Nanaimo-North Cowichan	56
36	Nechako Lakes	50
37	Nelson-Creston	53
38	New Westminster	72
39	North Coast	39
40	North Island	89
41	North Vancouver-Lonsdale	41
42	North Vancouver-Seymour	15
43	Oak Bay-Gordon Head	29
44	Parksville-Qualicum	34
45	Peace River North	65
46	Peace River South	64
47	Penticton	87
48	Port Coquitlam	82
49	Port Moody-Coquitlam	31
50	Powell River-Sunshine Coast	59
51	Prince George-Mackenzie	74
52	Prince George-Valemount	136
53	Richmond Centre	22
54	Richmond East	26
55	Richmond-Steveston	23
56	Saanich North and the Islands	70
57	Saanich South	60
58	Shuswap	76
59	Skeena	38
60	Stikine	40
61	Surrey-Cloverdale	46
62	Surrey-Fleetwood	24
63	Surrey-Green Timbers	35
64	Surrey-Newton	27
65	Surrey-Panorama	52
66	Surrey-Tynehead	43
67	Surrey-Whalley	74
68	Surrey-White Rock	40
69	Vancouver-Fairview	32
70	Vancouver-False Creek	50
71	Vancouver-Fraserview	22
72	Vancouver-Hastings	27
73	Vancouver-Kensington	34
74	Vancouver-Kingsway	24
75	Vancouver-Langara	20
76	Vancouver-Mount Pleasant	107
77	Vancouver-Point Grey	23
78	Vancouver-Quilchena	20
79	Vancouver-West End	37
80	Vernon-Monashee	67
81	Victoria-Beacon Hill	154
82	Victoria-Swan Lake	98
83	West Vancouver-Capilano	39
84	West Vancouver-Sea to Sky	41
85	Westside-Kelowna	73
	Total	**4721**

* These numbers do not include requests for information or assistance. They also do not include files involving individuals currently residing outside the province, or who did not provide a postal code.

Statistics

Open Files at the End of the Year



Number of Open Files at the End of Each Year

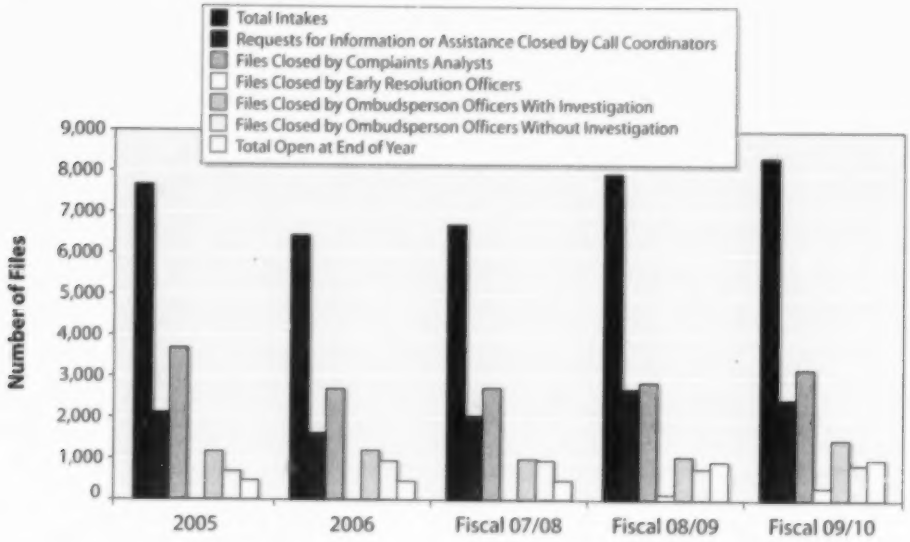
	2005*	2006	Fiscal 07/08	Fiscal 08/09**	Fiscal 09/10**
Files in Hold Queue	79	0	0	0	0
Files Open and Assigned	387	452	471	932	816
Files Awaiting Assignment	0	0	0	0	176
	466	**452**	**471**	**932**	**992**

* In 2005, we also declined 42 files due to lack of resources.

** Files Open and Assigned at the end of fiscal 08/09 and fiscal 09/10 include 204 files and 225 files, respectively, associated with the ongoing systemic investigation into seniors' care.

Statist

Office Caseload

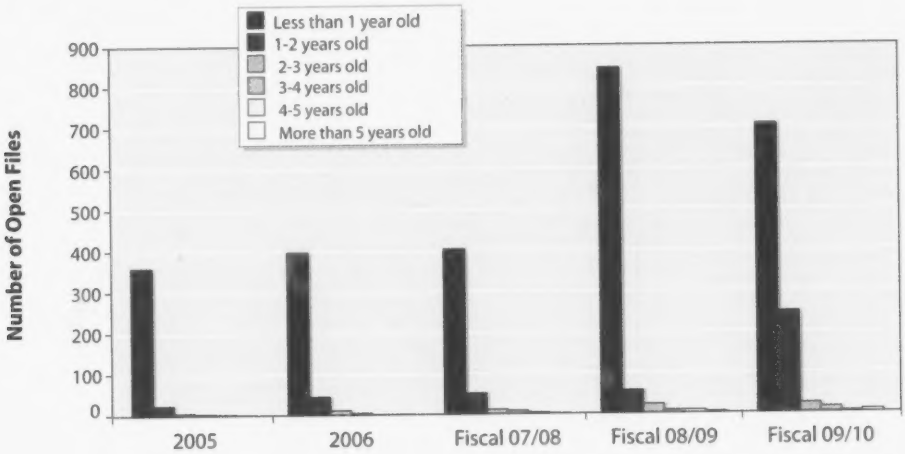


Breakdown of Office Case Activity

	2005	2006	Fiscal 07/08	Fiscal 08/09	Fiscal 09/10
Open at the Beginning of the Year					
Files in Hold Queue	50	79	0	0	0
Files Open and Assigned	406	387	486	471	932
Files Awaiting Assignment	0	0	0	0	0
Total Open at Beginning of Year	**456**	**466**	**486**	**471**	**932**
Intakes					
Requests for Information or Assistance – Jurisdictional	1,054	825	1,100	1,422	1,196
Requests for Information or Assistance – Non-Jurisdictional	1,062	797	944	1,276	1,257
Files Opened – Jurisdictional	4,840	4,243	4,236	4,761	5,386
Files Opened – Non-Jurisdictional	506	383	419	489	505
Files Opened to the Hold Queue	200	190	0	0	0
Total Intakes	**7,662**	**6,438**	**6,699**	**7,948**	**8,344**
Files Re-opened	**2**	**8**	**2**	**14**	**0**
Closings					
Requests for Information or Assistance Closed by Call Coordinators	2,116	1,622	2,044	2,698	2,453
Files Closed by Complaints Analysts	3,683	2,695	2,722	2,855	3,185
Files Closed by Early Resolution Officers	0	0	0	134	310
Total Closed by Intake Team	**5,799**	**4,317**	**4,766**	**5,687**	**5,948**
Files Closed by Ombudsperson Officers With Investigation	1,165	1,197	994	1,050	1,471
Files Closed by Ombudsperson Officers Without Investigation	690	946	956	764	865
Total Closed by Ombudsperson Officers	**1,855**	**2,143**	**1,950**	**1,814**	**2,336**
Open at the End of the Year					
Files in Hold Queue	79	0	0	0	0
Files Open and Assigned	387	452	471	932	816
Files Awaiting Assignment	0	0	0	0	176
Total Open at End of year	**466**	**452**	**471**	**932**	**992**

Statistics

Age Distribution of Open Files



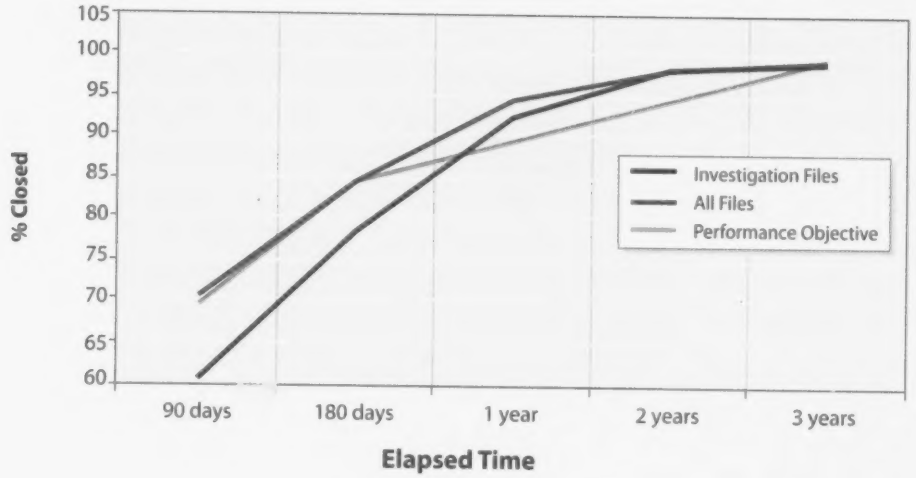
Number of Open Files at the End of Each Year

	2005	%	2006	%	Fiscal 07/08	%	Fiscal 08/09	%	Fiscal 09/10	%
Less Than 1 Year Old	358	▶92%	396	▶87%	402	▶85%	842*	▶90%	704**	▶70%
1-2 Years Old	22		43		50		55		246*	
2-3 Years Old	4		10		10		21		22	
3-4 Years Old	2	▶8%	3	▶13%	7	▶15%	6	▶10%	12	▶30%
4-5 Years Old	1		0		2		6		2	
More Than 5 Years Old	0		0		0		2		6	
Total Open Files	**387**		**452**		**471**		**932**		**992**	

* Files less than a year old open at the end of fiscal 08/09, and 1-2 years old at the end of fiscal 09/10, include 204 files and 209 files, respectively, associated with the ongoing systemic investigation into seniors' care. Files less than a year old at the end of fiscal 09/10 include 16 files associated with this investigation.

** Files less than a year old open at the end of fiscal 09/10 include 176 files on the Files Awaiting Assignment list.

Length of Time to Close Files (Files Closed in 2009/10)



Files Closed*

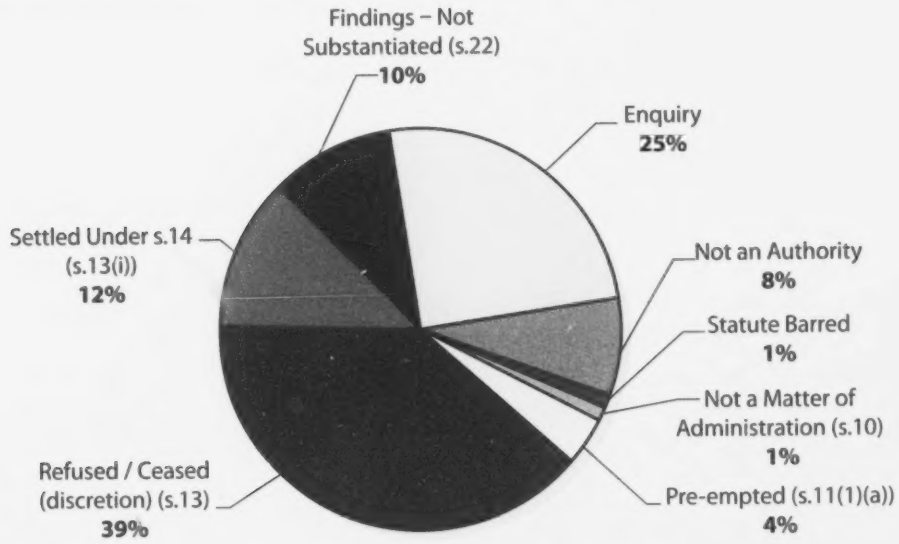
	2005		2006		Fiscal 07/08		Fiscal 08/09		Fiscal 09/10	
Closed Within 30 Days										
Investigation Files (including early resolution files)	399	34%	423	35%	284	29%	413	35%	645	37%
All Files	843	46%	1028	48%	923	47%	839	44%	1159	45%
Closed Within 90 Days										
Investigation Files	755	65%	791	66%	597	60%	747	64%	1064	61%
All Files	1393	76%	1661	78%	1492	77%	1424	74%	1837	71%
Closed Within 180 Days										
Investigation Files	959	82%	1023	85%	787	79%	1014	87%	1378	79%
All Files	1631	88%	1947	91%	1730	89%	1699	88%	2210	85%
Closed Within 1 Year										
Investigation Files	1102	95%	1154	96%	930	94%	1105	95%	1620	93%
All Files	1779	97%	2095	98%	1884	97%	1856	97%	2472	95%
Closed Within 2 Years										
Investigation Files	1150	98.7%	1192	99.6%	985	99.1%	1156	99.1%	1715	98.7%
All Files	1828	99.2%	2134	99.8%	1941	99.5%	1911	99.4%	2571	99.1%
Closed Within 3 Years										
Investigation Files	1160	99.6%	1194	99.7%	992	99.8%	1166	99.9%	1732	99.7%
All Files	1838	99.7%	2136	99.9%	1948	99.9%	1921	99.9%	2588	99.8%

Performance Objectives
70% closed within 90 days
85% closed within 180 days
90% closed within one year
95% closed within two years
100% closed within three years

*These timelines include files assigned to the investigative teams and files closed through the early resolution process.

Statistics

How We Closed Files in 2009/10


Findings – Not Substantiated (s.22) 10%
Enquiry 25%
Settled Under s.14 (s.13(i)) 12%
Not an Authority 8%
Statute Barred 1%
Not a Matter of Administration (s.10) 1%
Refused / Ceased (discretion) (s.13) 39%
Pre-empted (s.11(1)(a)) 4%

Closing Status	No Investigation	ERP Investigation	Investigation	Total Matters Closed*
Enquiry	1,521	n/a	n/a	1,521
Not an Authority	501	n/a	n/a	501
Statute Barred	26	n/a	n/a	26
Not a Matter of Administration (s.10)	37	n/a	5	42
Pre-empted (s.11(1)(a))	207	n/a	7	214
Refused/Ceased (discretion) (s.13)	1,758	26	597	2,381
s.13(a)	0	0	0	0
s.13(b)	21	1	1	23
s.13(c)	1,088	4	100	1,192
s.13(d)	0	0	0	0
s.13(e)	106	0	208	314
s.13(f)	165	21	228	414
s.13(g)	203	0	28	231
s.13(h)	175	0	32	207
Settled Under s.14 (s.13(i))	n/a	284	464	748
Findings – Substantiated (s.23)	n/a	n/a	0	0
Findings – Not Substantiated (s.22)	n/a	n/a	627	627
Total Closings	**4,050**	**310**	**1,700**	**6,060**
Total Files Closed*	**4,050**	**310**	**1,471**	**5,831**

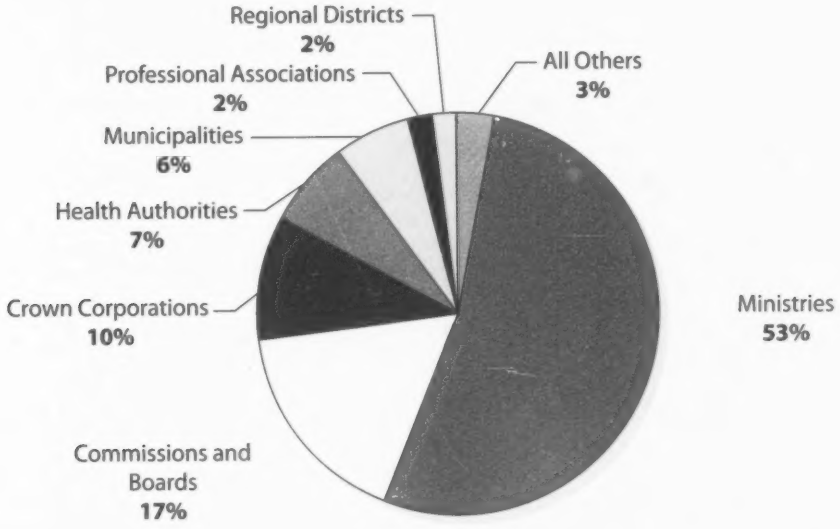
*For files closed as Investigation, the number of files closed is no longer the same as the number of closings. Starting July, 2003, we began closing each issue, or matter of administration identified on a file, separately. Each Investigation file has one or many matters of administration. Therefore the number of matters closed during a period may be greater than the number of files closed during that period. A file is considered closed when all of its matters of administration are closed.

Significant Authorities

		2008/09	2009/10
#	Authority	% of Total Jur. Files Opened (4,761 files total)	% of Total Jur. Files Opened (5,386 files total)
1	Ministry of Housing and Social Development	15.6%	17.4%
2	Ministry of Children and Family Development	12.4%	12.1%
3	WorkSafeBC	5.1%	7.3%
4	Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General	7.2%	7.3%
5	ICBC	5.1%	6.5%
6	Ministry of Attorney General	3.5%	3.7%
7	Ministry of Health Services	4.0%	3.7%
8	BC Housing	1.8%	2.8%
9	Ministry of Finance	1.0%	2.4%
10	BC Hydro	1.5%	1.9%
11	Vancouver Island Health Authority	4.2%	1.9%
12	Interior Health Authority	2.1%	1.8%
13	Public Guardian and Trustee	1.7%	1.8%
14	Fraser Health Authority	2.5%	1.6%
15	Ministry of Environment	1.4%	1.3%

Statistics

Authority Distribution
(for Jurisdictional Files Opened in 2009/10)



Total Jurisdictional Files Opened in 2009/10: 5,386

Ministries (53%)		
Housing and Social Development	33%	936
Children and Family Development	23%	651
Public Safety and Solicitor General	14%	394
Attorney General	7%	199
Health Services	7%	198
Finance	5%	132
Environment	2%	69
Labour	2%	48
Transportation and Infrastructure	2%	44
Advanced Education and Labour Market Development	2%	43
Other Ministries	3%	122

Commissions and Boards (17%)		
WorkSafeBC	44%	395
BC Housing	17%	153
Public Guardian and Trustee	11%	95
Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal	6%	56
BC Utilities Commission	2%	19
Consumer Protection BC	2%	19
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	2%	17
Premier's Office	2%	17
Human Rights Tribunal	2%	15
TransLink	1%	13
Agricultural Land Commission	1%	12
BC Ambulance Service	1%	12
Labour Relations Board	1%	12
Other Commissions and Boards	8%	72

Statistics

Crown Corporations (10%)		
ICBC	64%	352
BC Hydro	19%	104
BC Lottery Corporation	5%	26
Community Living BC	5%	25
BC Assessment	3%	19
Homeowner Protection Office	2%	11
Other Crown Corporations	2%	9

Health Authorities (7%)		
Vancouver Island Health Authority	25%	101
Interior Health Authority	24%	98
Fraser Health Authority	21%	86
Vancouver Coastal Health Authority	14%	56
Northern Health Authority	8%	33
Provincial Health Services Authority	8%	31

Municipalities (6%)		
City of Vancouver	9%	27
City of Surrey	5%	14
District of Mission	3%	9
City of Cranbrook	3%	8
City of Kelowna	3%	8
City of Nanaimo	3%	8
District of Saanich	3%	8
Other Municipalities	71%	220

Professional Associations (2%)		
College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC	40%	54
Law Society of British Columbia	37%	50
College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia	4%	5
Other Professional Associations	19%	25

Regional Districts (2%)		
Central Okanagan Regional District	10%	9
Nanaimo Regional District	10%	9
Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District	7%	6
Other Regional Districts	73%	63

All Others (3%)		
Schools and Boards of Education	35%	59
Colleges	18%	31
Universities	18%	30
Parks Boards	15%	26
Improvement Districts	9%	15
Islands Trust	3%	5
Libraries	2%	3

Statistics

Authorities by Section of the Schedule to the *Ombudsperson Act*	Files Open as of April 1, 2009	Requests for Information or Assistance	Files Opened	Files Closed								Files Open as of March 31, 2010
				Enquiries	Declined (s.10, 11)	Refused/Ceased (discretion) (s.13)	Settled under s.14 (s.13(1))	Not Substantiated (s.22)	Findings Substantiated (s.23)	Total Matters Closed	Total Files Closed	
Ministries	**345**	**541**	**2836**	**736**	**207**	**1237**	**441**	**339**	**0**	**2960**	**2844**	**337**
Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Advanced Education and Labour Market Development	8	2	43	16	0	15	8	8	0	47	46	5
Agriculture and Lands	2	0	13	3	3	2	2	1	0	11	11	4
Attorney General	20	12	199	42	8	101	26	27	0	204	197	22
Children and Family Development	92	20	651	118	4	417	64	65	0	668	641	102
Citizens' Services	0	113	15	4	0	2	3	5	0	14	14	1
Community and Rural Development	3	3	27	5	1	7	4	11	0	28	28	2
Education	2	2	8	5	0	1	1	2	0	9	9	1
Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources	4	1	18	3	2	2	3	2	0	12	12	10
Environment	22	0	69	35	3	35	11	7	0	91	82	9
Finance	30	6	132	31	1	35	47	34	0	148	138	24
Forests and Range	8	0	31	7	1	14	5	8	0	35	34	5
Health Services	40	10	198	42	2	47	78	46	0	215	206	32
Healthy Living and Sport	2	1	5	3	0	2	1	0	0	6	6	1
Housing and Social Development	73	228	936	252	173	344	154	46	0	969	938	71
Labour	1	90	48	25	2	11	6	1	0	45	45	4
Public Safety and Solicitor General	23	50	394	130	7	182	25	56	0	400	384	33
Tourism, Culture and the Arts	1	0	3	2	0	1	0	1	0	4	4	0
Transportation and Infrastructure	14	3	44	13	0	19	2	19	0	53	48	10
Commissions and Boards	**118**	**447**	**907**	**281**	**57**	**355**	**136**	**98**	**0**	**927**	**884**	**141**
Agricultural Land Commission	5	0	12	2	0	6	3	3	0	14	14	3
BC Ambulance Service	6	1	12	3	1	4	5	0	0	13	13	5
BC Farm Industry Review Board	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	4	2	1
BC Housing	10	5	153	27	0	106	14	7	0	154	153	10
BC Safety Authority	0	0	5	2	0	0	0	1	0	3	3	2
BC Securities Commission	2	1	4	2	0	1	1	2	0	6	5	1
BC Utilities Commission	5	41	19	12	0	3	1	3	0	19	19	5
College Pension Board of Trustees	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Consumer Protection BC	0	235	19	16	0	1	1	1	0	19	18	1
Coroners Service	4	0	2	0	0	3	1	4	0	8	6	0
Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	2	0
Employment Standards Tribunal	1	0	5	0	0	2	1	2	0	5	5	1
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	3	0	17	0	1	14	0	2	0	17	17	3

Statistics

Authorities by Section of the Schedule to the *Ombudsperson Act*	Files Open as of April 1, 2009	Requests for Information or Assistance	Files Opened	Files Closed								Files Open as of March 31, 2010
				Enquiries	Declined (s.10, 11)	Refused/Ceased (discretion) (s.13)	Settled under s.14 (s.13(1))	Not Substantiated (s.22)	Findings Substantiated (s.23)	Total Matters Closed	Total Files Closed	
Financial Institutions Commission	2	37	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	4	3	0
Forest Practices Board	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Health Professions Review Board	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Human Rights Tribunal	2	20	15	4	0	5	1	2	0	12	11	6
Industry Training Authority	2	0	4	2	0	1	2	1	0	6	6	0
Insurance Council of BC	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Labour Relations Board	0	34	12	9	0	3	0	0	0	12	12	0
Land Title and Survey Authority	1	0	5	2	0	2	0	1	0	5	5	1
Mediation and Arbitration Board	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	0
Motor Dealer Customer Compensation Fund Board	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Motor Vehicle Sales Authority of BC	1	46	3	1	0	2	1	1	0	5	4	0
Municipal Pension Board of Trustees	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	3	2	1
Pension Corporation	4	0	9	2	2	5	3	1	0	13	13	0
Premier's Office	1	0	17	15	0	2	1	0	0	18	18	0
Private Career Training Institutions Agency	1	12	11	9	0	1	0	1	0	11	11	1
Property Assessment Appeal Board	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Provincial Capital Commission	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Public Guardian and Trustee	15	1	95	20	1	50	17	12	0	100	94	16
Public Service Pension Board of Trustees	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
Real Estate Council	1	12	11	3	0	5	0	3	0	11	9	3
Safety Standards Appeal Board	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Teachers' Pension Board of Trustees	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	0
TransLink	1	0	13	4	0	4	3	1	0	12	11	3
West Shore Parks and Recreation Society	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal	9	1	56	16	3	25	1	12	0	57	54	11
WorkSafeBC	34	1	395	129	48	104	78	22	0	381	365	64
Crown Corporations	**52**	**67**	**546**	**128**	**7**	**330**	**49**	**34**	**0**	**548**	**538**	**60**
BC Assessment	2	0	19	4	1	8	1	4	0	18	18	3
BC Hydro	9	22	104	18	2	63	13	9	0	105	104	9
BC Lottery Corporation	4	0	26	15	0	6	4	5	0	30	28	2
BC Pavilion Corporation	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
BC Transit	0	0	6	3	0	0	1	0	0	4	4	2
BC Transmission Corporation	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
British Columbia Railway Company	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Statistics

Authorities by Section of the Schedule to the *Ombudsperson Act*	Files Open as of April 1, 2009	Requests for Information or Assistance	Files Opened	Files Closed								Files Open as of March 31, 2010
				Enquiries	Declined (s.10, 11)	Refused/Ceased (discretion) (s.13)	Settled under s.14 (s.13(i))	Not Substantiated (s.22)	Findings Substantiated (s.23)	Total Matters Closed	Total Files Closed	
Columbia Power Corporation	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Community Living BC	13	0	25	6	0	15	6	0	0	27	27	11
Homeowner Protection Office	1	0	11	1	0	8	0	1	0	10	10	2
ICBC	20	45	352	81	4	227	24	14	0	350	343	29
Tourism BC	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Municipalities	**81**	**12**	**302**	**77**	**3**	**168**	**32**	**63**	**0**	**343**	**315**	**68**
Bowen Island Municipality	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
City of Abbotsford	10	0	6	1	0	3	0	3	0	7	5	11
City of Armstrong	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
City of Burnaby	0	0	5	1	0	3	0	2	0	6	5	0
City of Campbell River	0	0	6	4	0	0	0	1	0	5	5	1
City of Chilliwack	2	0	3	0	0	6	0	0	0	6	5	0
City of Colwood	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
City of Coquitlam	0	0	7	1	0	5	0	1	0	7	7	0
City of Courtenay	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
City of Cranbrook	0	1	8	1	0	5	0	0	0	6	6	2
City of Dawson Creek	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
City of Enderby	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
City of Fernie	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0
City of Fort St. John	1	0	3	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	4	0
City of Grand Forks	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
City of Kamloops	2	0	6	2	0	5	0	2	0	9	8	0
City of Kelowna	2	0	8	3	0	3	1	4	0	11	10	0
City of Kimberley	1	0	3	1	0	3	0	0	0	4	4	0
City of Langford	1	0	4	1	0	2	0	1	0	4	4	1
City of Langley	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	4	2	0
City of Merritt	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
City of Nanaimo	3	0	8	5	0	1	3	1	0	10	10	1
City of Nelson	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
City of New Westminster	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	1	0	3	3	0
City of North Vancouver	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
City of Parksville	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
City of Penticton	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0
City of Pitt Meadows	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
City of Port Alberni	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	4	3	0
City of Port Moody	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
City of Powell River	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	0
City of Prince George	1	1	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	4	1

Statistics

Authorities by Section of the Schedule to the *Ombudsperson Act*	Files Open as of April 1, 2009	Requests for Information or Assistance	Files Opened	Files Closed								Files Open as of March 31, 2010
				Enquiries	Declined (s.10, 11)	Refused/Ceased (discretion) (s.13)	Settled under s.14 (s.13(i))	Not Substantiated (s.22)	Findings Substantiated (s.23)	Total Matters Closed	Total Files Closed	
City of Prince Rupert	0	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	3	1
City of Quesnel	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	3	0
City of Revelstoke	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	1	0
City of Richmond	3	0	6	0	0	5	1	2	0	8	7	2
City of Salmon Arm	2	0	7	2	0	5	0	0	0	7	7	2
City of Surrey	5	2	14	3	0	9	2	1	0	15	14	5
City of Terrace	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
City of Trail	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
City of Vancouver	3	0	27	7	1	10	2	1	0	21	21	9
City of Vernon	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0
City of Victoria	1	0	5	1	0	4	0	1	0	6	6	0
City of White Rock	0	0	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	3	3	0
City of Williams Lake	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Corporation of Delta	2	0	3	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	3	2
District of 100 Mile House	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
District of Central Saanich	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0
District of Clearwater	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
District of Coldstream	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	0
District of Elkford	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	0
District of Hope	2	0	4	1	0	3	1	1	0	6	6	0
District of Houston	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
District of Invermere	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
District of Kent	0	0	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	3	0
District of Kitimat	0	0	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	3	0
District of Lake Country	1	0	4	1	0	1	1	2	0	5	4	1
District of Lantzville	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	2	0
District of Maple Ridge	1	0	3	0	0	3	2	1	0	6	4	0
District of Mission	2	0	9	4	0	3	0	0	0	7	7	4
District of North Saanich	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
District of North Vancouver	0	1	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	3	0
District of Peachland	0	0	4	2	0	2	0	0	0	4	4	0
District of Saanich	1	0	8	1	0	3	1	3	0	8	7	2
District of Sechelt	1	0	3	1	0	1	1	1	0	4	4	0
District of Sicamous	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
District of Sooke	1	0	2	0	0	2	1	3	0	6	2	1
District of Sparwood	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
District of Squamish	2	0	2	0	0	3	0	1	0	4	4	0
District of Stewart	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0

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District of Summerland	0	0	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	3	1
District of Taylor	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
District of Tofino	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	0
District of Tumbler Ridge	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	0
District of West Vancouver	0	0	5	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	3	2
District of Westside	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Municipality of North Cowichan	1	1	6	2	0	3	0	1	0	6	6	1
Resort Municipality of Whistler	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0
Town of Comox	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Town of Creston	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Town of Gibsons	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Town of Ladysmith	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Town of Lake Cowichan	0	0	4	1	0	0	1	1	0	3	3	1
Town of Oliver	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Town of Osoyoos	0	1	5	1	0	2	0	2	0	5	4	1
Town of Port McNeill	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Town of Princeton	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Town of Qualicum Beach	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0
Town of Smithers	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Township of Langley	1	0	5	0	1	3	0	2	0	6	5	1
Township of Spallumcheen	0	0	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	3	0
Village of Anmore	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Village of Ashcroft	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Village of Chase	2	0	5	0	0	5	1	3	0	9	7	0
Village of Fruitvale	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Village of Granisle	2	0	3	1	0	2	0	1	0	4	4	1
Village of Harrison Hot Springs	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	2
Village of Keremeos	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	1
Village of Lytton	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Village of New Denver	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Village of Port Clements	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0
Village of Pouce Coupe	1	0	3	1	0	2	1	0	0	4	4	0
Village of Queen Charlotte	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Village of Sayward	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Village of Slocan	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Village of Telkwa	0	0	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	4	4	0
Village of Valemount	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	2	0
Village of Warfield	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0

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Regional Districts	**19**	**0**	**87**	**19**	**1**	**41**	**5**	**20**	**0**	**86**	**82**	**24**
Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Capital Regional District	2	0	5	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	4	3
Cariboo Regional District	3	0	2	1	0	1	1	3	0	6	4	1
Central Coast Regional District	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Central Kootenay Regional District	0	0	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	3
Central Okanagan Regional District	1	0	9	0	1	3	0	6	0	10	8	2
Columbia-Shuswap Regional District	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Comox Valley Regional District	0	0	5	2	0	1	1	1	0	5	5	0
Cowichan Valley Regional District	5	0	4	0	0	4	1	3	0	8	8	1
East Kootenay Regional District	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
Fraser Valley Regional District	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
Fraser-Fort George Regional District	1	0	5	2	0	3	0	0	0	5	5	1
Greater Vancouver Regional District	0	0	4	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	3	1
Kitimat-Stikine Regional District	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Kootenay Boundary Regional District	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Mount Waddington Regional District	0	0	5	2	0	2	0	0	0	4	4	1
Nanaimo Regional District	0	0	9	4	0	4	0	0	0	8	8	1
North Okanagan Regional District	2	0	4	3	0	1	0	1	0	5	5	1
Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District	3	0	6	2	0	4	1	2	0	9	9	0
Peace River Regional District	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	0
Squamish-Lillooet Regional District	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Strathcona Regional District	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0
Sunshine Coast Regional District	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	0
Thompson-Nicola Regional District	0	0	5	2	0	2	0	1	0	5	5	0
Islands Trust	**0**	**0**	**5**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**4**	**1**
Improvement Districts	**3**	**0**	**15**	**5**	**0**	**5**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**12**	**12**	**6**
Beaver Creek Improvement District	0	0	4	1	0	1	1	0	0	3	3	1
Black Mountain Irrigation District	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
Bowser Waterworks District	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bridesville Waterworks District	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Cherry Creek Waterworks District	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Clearbrook Waterworks District	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0

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Cowichan Bay Waterworks District	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Gillies Bay Improvement District	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Lakeview Irrigation District	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
North Canyon Improvement District	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Okanagan Falls Irrigation District	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Robson-Raspberry Improvement District	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Royston Improvement District	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Seagirt Waterworks District	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Libraries	**1**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**4**	**4**	**0**
Beaver Valley Public Library	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Greater Victoria Public Library	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	0
Surrey Public Library	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Parks Boards	**0**	**0**	**26**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**2**	**24**
Cultus Lake Park Board	0	0	26	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	24
Schools and Boards of Education	**17**	**1**	**59**	**16**	**1**	**31**	**10**	**10**	**0**	**68**	**62**	**14**
School District 05 (Southeast Kootenay)	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
School District 06 (Rocky Mountain)	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
School District 08 (Kootenay Lake)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
School District 22 (Vernon)	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
School District 23 (Central Okanagan)	0	0	4	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	3	1
School District 33 (Chilliwack)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	0
School District 34 (Abbotsford)	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0
School District 35 (Langley)	1	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	2
School District 36 (Surrey)	1	0	2	0	0	2	1	2	0	5	3	0
School District 37 (Delta)	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	0
School District 38 (Richmond)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
School District 39 (Vancouver)	0	0	7	2	0	2	3	0	0	7	7	0
School District 40 (New Westminster)	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
School District 43 (Coquitlam)	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
School District 44 (North Vancouver)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
School District 46 (Sunshine Coast)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
School District 52 (Prince Rupert)	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
School District 57 (Prince George)	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

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School District 58 (Nicola-Similkameen)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
School District 59 (Peace River South)	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
School District 61 (Greater Victoria)	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0
School District 63 (Saanich)	0	0	4	2	1	0	0	1	0	4	4	0
School District 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith)	5	0	2	0	0	10	0	0	0	10	7	0
School District 69 (Qualicum)	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	1	0	3	3	0
School District 70 (Alberni)	0	0	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	3	0
School District 71 (Comox Valley)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
School District 73 (Kamloops/ Thompson)	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
School District 74 (Gold Trail)	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
School District 79 (Cowichan Valley)	1	0	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	3	3	1
School District 82 (Coast Mountains)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
School District 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap)	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	3	0
School District 84 (Vancouver Island West)	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
School District 85 (Vancouver Island North)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
School District 87 (Stikine)	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
School District 91 (Nechako Lakes)	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
School District 93 (Conseil Scolaire Francophone)	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Universities	**5**	**0**	**30**	**12**	**0**	**13**	**5**	**3**	**0**	**33**	**31**	**4**
Capilano University	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	1
Simon Fraser University	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	3	3	0
Thompson Rivers University	0	0	6	3	0	3	0	0	0	6	6	0
University of British Columbia	3	0	5	4	0	2	2	0	0	8	7	1
University of Northern BC	0	0	5	1	0	3	0	0	0	4	4	1
University of Victoria	0	0	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	3	3	0
University of the Fraser Valley	0	0	4	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	3	1
Vancouver Island University	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	3	3	0
Colleges	**13**	**1**	**31**	**11**	**0**	**21**	**0**	**4**	**0**	**36**	**35**	**9**
BC Institute of Technology	0	0	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	4	4	0
Camosun College	1	1	3	0	0	2	0	1	0	3	3	1

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College of New Caledonia	0	0	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	3	0
College of the Rockies	9	0	2	0	0	10	0	0	0	10	9	2
Douglas College	1	0	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3
Justice Institute of BC	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	1	0	3	3	0
Langara College	1	0	3	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	3	1
North Island College	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Northern Lights College	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Okanagan College	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
Vancouver Community College	1	0	4	2	0	2	0	1	0	5	5	0
Professional Associations	**22**	**106**	**134**	**70**	**2**	**43**	**21**	**12**	**0**	**148**	**142**	**14**
Assoc. of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Association of Professional Foresters	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	0
BC Institute of Agrologists	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	0
BC Veterinary Medical Association	1	0	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	3	3	1
British Columbia College of Social Workers	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	0
Certified General Accountants Association of BC	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
College of Chiropractors of BC	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
College of Dental Surgeons of BC	2	6	3	3	0	0	0	2	0	5	5	0
College of Denturists of BC	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
College of Licensed Practical Nurses of BC	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	0
College of Naturopathic Physicians of BC	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
College of Optometrists of BC	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0
College of Pharmacists of BC	0	1	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	3	3	0
College of Physical Therapists of BC	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC	2	44	54	34	0	10	7	1	0	52	51	5
College of Psychologists of BC	3	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	3	1
College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia	0	0	5	2	0	2	1	1	0	6	5	0
College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of BC	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
College of Teachers	2	0	2	0	0	3	0	2	0	5	4	0
Institute of Chartered Accountants of BC	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Law Society of British Columbia	8	48	50	25	2	19	4	4	0	54	53	5

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Health Authorities	**255**	**21**	**405**	**159**	**4**	**131**	**47**	**42**	**0**	**383**	**370**	**290**
Fraser Health Authority	61	1	86	38	0	27	7	8	0	80	78	69
Interior Health Authority	43	3	98	34	1	34	15	7	0	91	88	53
Northern Health Authority	14	2	33	15	0	14	4	0	0	33	33	14
Provincial Health Services Authority	1	1	31	11	0	13	1	6	0	31	30	2
Vancouver Coastal Health Authority	28	6	56	20	3	17	7	7	0	54	52	32
Vancouver Island Health Authority	108	8	101	41	0	26	13	14	0	94	89	120
Jurisdictional Totals	**931**	**1196**	**5386**	**1517**	**282**	**2380**	**748**	**627**	**0**	**5554**	**5325**	**992**
Non-Jurisdictional Totals	**1**	**1257**	**505**	**4**	**501**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**506**	**506**	**0**
Grand Totals	**932**	**2453**	**5891**	**1521**	**783**	**2381**	**748**	**627**	**0**	**6060**	**5831**	**992**

Staff

Alan Moyes
Amanda Welch
Anne Graves
Brad Cambrey
Bruce Clarke
Bruce Edmundson
Bruce Ronayne
Carly Hyman
Carol Kemeny
Christina McMillan
Christine Morris
Dale Bryant
David Gagnon
David Murray
Debora Moore
Diana Elliott
Diana Moffat
Diane Johnston
Dorothy Hayward
Gary Dhaliwal
Gordon Brandt
Graham Fisher
Harry Vogt
Heather Stewart
Ian MacCuish
Jacqueline Restall
Janet Hacker
Janice Curtis
Jasun Fox
Jayne Elder
Jennifer Bertsch
Jocelyn Hubbard
Joey Fearon
John Bradbury
Judy Ashbourne
Karen Sawatzky
Karin Heimlich
Katherine Jeakins
Kathy Bannister
Kelvin Hickie
Kim Carter
Lanny Hubbard
Linda Blackman
Linda Carlson
Lisa Evans
Michelle Dailly
Natalie Desimini
Rhonda Brown
Richard Webber
Roberto Alberto
Rochelle Walter
Rose Stanton
Ross Barlow
Sandra Chan
Sarah Barnes
Sarah Jackson
Scott Wingrove
Shelley Forrester
Shera Skinner
Shirley Bond
Susan Berry
Suzanne Grant
Teri Burley
Victor Gardner
Zoe Jackson

*This list includes part-time staff and all staff who were with us for only part of the fiscal year.

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